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Brill's Companion to Classics and Early Anthropology

Edited by

Emily Varto



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*I dedicate this volume to my Mummi and to all
of those we have lost along the way.*



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Introduction to *The Classics and Early Anthropology*

Emily Varto

In the late nineteenth century, the budding field of anthropology was said by Edward Burnett Tylor, one of its foremost early practitioners, to enable the “great modern nations to understand themselves, to weigh in a just balance their own merits and defects, and even in some measure to forecast from their own development the possibilities of the future.”¹ Studying the “savage and barbaric peoples” would aide anthropologists in this lofty goal.² So too, would the Greeks and the Romans. This volume collects studies that explore the role the classics had in this great enterprise, this field through which humanity’s present and future were to be understood.

Early Anthropology

I must admit upfront that “early anthropology” is an anachronism, but a useful and, perhaps, necessary one. On the one hand, it describes anachronistically a discipline that did not formally exist throughout most of the nineteenth century and during its inception was guided by several different goals, methods, and habits of thought, many unfamiliar to today’s practitioners. A discipline largely delineated by its approaches, techniques, and goals, even as they vary considerably, (rather than by the geographical or temporal reach of its subject matter) is contentious to define, even from its origin story. Already in 1904, Franz Boas claimed that the origins of anthropology were too multifarious for it to survive as a discipline.³ On the other hand, “early anthropology” is a helpful shorthand for the pursuits, scholarly and otherwise, that would eventually come to fall under the umbrella term “anthropology,” or contribute

¹ Tylor 1896, v.

² Tylor 1896, v.

³ See Stocking 2001, 308. For an account of the development of anthropology’s contentious disciplinary boundaries and subdivisions, see Stocking 2001, 303–29. Stocking, following Boas’ lead, identifies anthropology’s origins as a fusion of multiple modes of inquiry, which can be traced from various origin points in the eighteenth century: natural history, philology, moral philosophy, and antiquarianism (2001, 308–9).

significantly to the development of the discipline that would take that name. Taken as the latter and defined broadly, “early anthropology” encompasses the work of those scholars, dilettantes, lawyers, and government officials, interested in “culture,” as defined in the latter part of the nineteenth century by Tylor, who wrote the first anthropology textbook. Culture was “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”⁴ What was developing was both a “science of savages” studying unfamiliar “others” and a “science of mankind” studying “others” to arrive at universal truths about humankind.

What precisely terms like anthropology, ethnology, and ethnography meant and encompassed was hotly debated well into the twentieth century (and continues to be debated today). Ethnography and ethnology are the terms most often used to describe the early work of anthropology. Ethnography studied the “other,” although not yet named as such, usually through the descriptive accounting of cultural details (for example, customs, kinship structures, religious practices, and institutions). Ethnology studied cultures in relation to each other and, inherently, to one’s own culture. It connected and situated multiple peoples, and treated the subjects of mankind and its progress more generally, and sometimes universally. It was in many ways a story of self: it was a story told through “others” to understand one’s own culture’s present and future, as Tylor suggested.

Although ethnography and ethnology were terms used, then and now, in labelling the discipline that is at present typically called anthropology, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pursuits in history, archaeology, linguistics, and comparative philology also fall under the wider umbrella of early anthropology, for their interest in cultural studies and comparative methods. The comparative studies that were so fundamental to early anthropological theory were indeed derived from the methods and interests of comparative philology, as Turner has recently argued in his book on philology and the development of the modern humanities.⁵

The story of anthropology is, of course, also bound up in the wider history of Western academia, which became divided into discrete disciplines in most national traditions only toward the end of the nineteenth century. Most of the founding figures of anthropology are also considered founding figures of the humanities and other social sciences. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, for example, although technically a professor of history, is often credited as a founder of sociology and, more generally, of the French sociological tradition in other disciplines. Consider also Sir Henry Sumner Maine, a classically trained

4 Tylor 1891, 1:1.

5 Turner 2014, 328–56. See also Stocking 1991, 22–24.

lawyer and a member of the Indian Civil Service, whose volume *Ancient Law* is one of the seminal works in the study of jurisprudence, as well as in anthropology and sociology. These men (and the vast majority of them were indeed men) and their studies defy categorization along the lines of the disciplines their work helped to generate.

Making a distinction between professional scholars and dilettantes is not very useful here either. Those interested in studying “the science of savages” and “the science of mankind” included clergymen, doctors, and lawyers poking around indigenous American mounds for curiosity’s sake, colonial office holders and civil servants recording information on “new” or subject peoples, and academic historians and philologists studying so-called primitive cultures.⁶ Their interests grew in part from earlier antiquarian pursuits inspired by early modern European globalization and empire, and the meeting of more and more non-European and unfamiliar peoples. Their interests increased in tandem with imperial and colonial acquisitions and encounters in the nineteenth century.

What in many instances was an amateur, curiosity-driven interest in studying other cultures was propelled towards a “science of mankind” by discoveries and new theories in geology, biology, and human prehistory. These included the extension of the age of the earth, as well as Darwinian evolution and its precursors. In the mid- to late nineteenth century, the age of the earth and the length of time people had already spent upon it were discovered to be so expansive, that the bottom effectively dropped out of history. There was now a vast prehistory of human life that could not be told in narrative accounts but could be told through ethnographic description and social evolutionary schemes. That was the work of nineteenth-century ethnologists, in particular, Sir Henry Sumner Maine, Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, Herbert Spencer, Sir John Lubbock, Lewis Henry Morgan, and E. B. Tylor. These early ethnologists developed grand (and sometimes universal) schemes built out of comparisons of multiple peoples, plucked out of time and place to represent various stages of human development.⁷ The overall drive was not just to describe or understand “others,” but to understand one’s own culture as the product of linear development from earlier primitive stages. Those primitive stages were represented well by other peoples met on colonial ventures around the world.⁸ As the opening quote from Tylor implies, one of the overall goals of studying the “other” was to understand oneself. Such comparative

6 Turner 2014, 328–39.

7 On primitivism, evolutionism, and the comparative method, see Stocking 1968.

8 See Kuper 2005 for a critical assessment of such nineteenth-century primitivism and its enduring influence in anthropology.

and evolutionary ethnological projects gave the newly forming discipline one of its earliest interpretative frameworks.

The first generation of professional academic anthropologists overlaps with this period of comparative evolutionary ethnology. Tylor became the first professional anthropologist at Oxford and seemingly in the UK in 1884; Daniel Garrison Brinton became the first professor of anthropology in the USA in 1886.⁹ By the 1890s, anthropology was an academic discipline, whether it went by that specific name or not.¹⁰ Differences, however, in methods and approaches are also part of the early story of anthropology, and differences were reinforced by varying regional and national materials, interests, and traditions. Like the similarly emerging field of archaeology, there was great variation in subject matter, interests, theories, and methods, as the discipline emerged and diverged among the scholarly traditions of North America, Britain, France, Germany, and the Nordic countries, as well as other less prominent traditions.¹¹ As Stocking has argued, anthropology's origin story is one of "fusion rather than fission" of traditions, interests, and methods.¹²

Following generations of anthropologists and sociologists working in these varying traditions—figures like Franz Boas, James George Frazer, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Bronisław Malinowski, and Émile Durkheim—would both build upon and critically undermine nineteenth-century ethnographic and ethnological work. They inherited many of the interests of their nineteenth-century evolutionist and primitivist forebears (especially, in religion, kinship, and social systems). As they adopted, adapted, debated, and sought to codify methods of fieldwork and disciplinary subject areas, they also seriously and effectively challenged and rejected ethnological comparative and evolutionist frameworks.¹³ They replaced them with new and contending modes of thinking about how different peoples relate to one another, how to approach and study "others" (especially through fieldwork), and what the purpose of studying anthropology is.¹⁴ As the field grew, it diverged in theory, practice, and purpose.

9 Turner 2014, 339–43.

10 Turner 2014, 340–41.

11 See Stocking 2001, 281–302; Hann 2005.

12 Stocking 2001, 308.

13 See Stocking 1995; Kuper 2005, 112–59.

14 On the multifarious development of anthropology from its varied origins and the tension between sub-disciplinary fusion and fracturing throughout the twentieth century, see Stocking 2001, 303–29. On the revolt against evolutionary ethnology and its ideas of culture and progress, see Stocking 1968, 195–233; 1991, 81–83.

Engaging with the Classics

It has been recognized that the classics had a formative role in the story of anthropology. The usual reasons cited are the wide availability of the texts of classical antiquity and scholarship on them, disciplinary privilege in schools and universities, and the importance of the classics as a marker of elite status.¹⁵ Classical scholarship provided a wealth of collected data from foreign cultures, edited, translated, analysed, and easily accessed in libraries and from the armchair. No other “other” was so well studied and documented; the classical civilizations were a useful, even natural, source for comparanda and heuristic tools in cross-cultural ethnological projects. The classics, however, had also been adopted as Europe’s history, part of its development. The classics merged both self and “other”; they represented a European past and an ethnographic “other.”

The esteem in which the classics were held and their intellectual and pedagogical dominance in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are well established. Like many other nineteenth-century academics and intellectuals, ethnologists and ethnographers often had their earliest and even advanced training in the classics. Maine trained in the classics at Cambridge. Morgan, a father of kinship studies, received an education in upstate New York, which was rich in the classics and seems to have instilled in him the idea of the virtues and vices of progress.¹⁶ In Britain especially, a classical education could be considered the purview and, therefore, a hallmark of the elite, or of those aspiring to be so. For example, facility in Greek and Latin was a more important factor for entrance into the Indian Civil Service than knowledge of local languages or customs, and was weighted equally with English—this kept the civil service the realm of the educated elite.¹⁷

Recent scholarship, however, also suggests that nineteenth-century engagement with the classical world was far more complex and varied than has traditionally been recognized. Toner’s recent *Homer’s Turk* explores surprising ways in which the classics shaped ideas about the East, beyond facilitating elite control over plum colonial posts.¹⁸ Richardson’s *Classical Victorians* shows how efforts to attain or feign elite status through the classics often failed or

15 Kucklick 1991, 6; Stocking 1995, xv–xvi; Ackerman 2008. Cf. Voget who downplays the influence of the classics as only “a segment in the cultural stream that had produced the contemporary world” (1975, 17–20), having lost its “intellectual light” during the Enlightenment.

16 Moses 2009.

17 Vasunia 2005; Toner 2013, 139.

18 Toner 2013.

even backfired.¹⁹ *Classics and Class*, a large and growing online archive of “class-conscious classical encounters” demonstrates that classical material was adopted and adapted outside of elite spheres in Britain from at least the seventeenth century.²⁰ It documents, for example, how striking dock workers in London dressed up as figures from classical mythology.²¹ It includes how Joseph Malaby Dent’s *Everyman Library* series increased the accessibility of the classics through mass-producing quality translations of Greek and Roman texts at affordable prices.²² The project also records the career of Alexander Crummel, a black American intellectual, priest, and civil rights campaigner, who learned ancient Greek as part of his studies at Cambridge. He undertook his studies in defiance of pro-slavery politicians, who claimed that people of African descent were unable to learn Greek syntax.²³ Crummel’s mastery of the classics proved them wrong. The classical tradition was not only a foundation of elite authority or a vehicle for social aspiration but also a tool of subversion, by which a dominant social order could be undermined.²⁴ Ronnick’s work on William Sanders Scarborough, who was born into slavery and later became Chair of Latin and Greek at Wilberforce University, reveals how African-American intellectualism, confronted with the complicity of the classics in slavery, developed its own interpretations and creative responses to classical traditions.²⁵

That the classics had many iterations, contexts, and meanings comes through clearly in Goldhill’s *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*.²⁶ The classics featured prominently, for example, in the Victorian roots of modern sexual revolutions, from the association of Greek philosophy with homosexuality to the intellectual and sexual freedom of feminism expressed in fantasies of pre-Christian sexual *mores*.²⁷ What Friedrich Schlegel said of the classics at the end of the eighteenth century remained true in the nineteenth: “Up to now, everyone has managed to find in the ancients what he needed or wished for; especially himself.”²⁸ It is a sentiment that accords well with Tylor’s idea of understanding one’s present and future through the study of “others.”

19 Richardson 2013.

20 Hall and Stead n.d., *Classics and Class*. See also the essays in Hall and Stead 2015.

21 Hall and Stead n.d., *Classics and Class*, “London Dockers in Classical Costume.”

22 Hall and Stead n.d., *Classics and Class*, “J. M. Dent.”

23 Hall and Stead n.d., *Classics and Class*, “Alexander Crummel.”

24 See also the essays in Goff 2005 and Hardwick and Gillespie 2010.

25 Scarborough and Ronnick 2005; 2006; McCoskey 2012, 194–97.

26 Goldhill 2011.

27 See also Orrells 2012.

28 Schlegel 1798 (1971), *Athenaeum Fragment* 151.

Like Schlegel's "everyone," the practitioners of early anthropology in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found in the ancients what they wanted and needed: both themselves and "others." As in other engagements with the classical world, however, what the classics signified and how they were employed were variable. From which sources, ancient and modern, did different anthropologists draw their inspiration and information? How did they interpret that material and what did they do with it? What influence did the emerging discoveries, interpretations, and methodologies of classical scholarship have on anthropological work? As the methodologies, tools, and techniques of anthropology developed, did the ways anthropologists encountered or interpreted the classics change? Anthropology and the classics clearly share an intellectual past, but the nature of the interaction is neither uniform nor straightforward.

Humphreys' entry on "anthropology" in *The Classical Tradition* only briefly mentions the use of classical data in nineteenth-century anthropology.²⁹ Humphreys focuses on the "long-term influence of ancient Greek ideas about the nature of man," rather than claiming that modern anthropology came from the Greeks. Such a claim would indeed be erroneous. The situation is far more complex than the growth of one discipline out of another, or the growth of anthropology out of the classical world. It is a multifaceted interaction between scholars, data, and theories.

In classical scholarship, there are a few important studies that have engaged with this interaction. From the 1940s to the 1980s, Momigliano made several key contributions which situated the classics in the intellectual history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³⁰ Humphreys' *Anthropology and the Greeks* addressed classical scholarship's renewed engagement with anthropological theories and methodologies in the late 1970s.³¹ It has now been over thirty-five years since this important book; it is time to update the historiography with current questions and concerns. The current fascination with reception studies allows for and impels this pursuit. Moreover, as interdisciplinary approaches have taken hold, understanding how these two modern disciplines have been shaped by each other is crucial. Some classicists, like Bettini and Detienne, have advocated for the use of anthropological approaches to the ancient world.³² Both, however, have had to contend with the baggage of the early interaction between anthropology and the classics, particularly

29 Humphreys 2010.

30 See the papers collected in Momigliano 1994.

31 Humphreys 1978.

32 Bettini 1991; 2000; 2010; Detienne 2005; 2007; 2008; 2009.

comparative techniques and theories based on racist, elitist, and Western supremacist assumptions. Suspicion of comparative approaches that might seem to revive such methods and theories has meant that those employing comparative techniques must continually distinguish their approaches from earlier ones or, as Short and Bettini note in this volume, avoid labelling their endeavours as “comparative” at all.

Some facets of this interaction have been studied recently. Ackerman's welcome contribution on the classics and anthropology in *A New History of Anthropology* makes some important general points about the interaction between disciplines, before focusing on the myth and folklore debates between classicists and social scientists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³³ Robinson has similarly written about the career of Jane Ellen Harrison.³⁴ Harrison was one of the better-known figures among the Cambridge Ritualists, the group of early twentieth-century classicists who, strongly influenced by sociology, attempted to understand the origins of ancient myths in ritual action. As part of a larger study on the Roman clan, Smith follows the intellectual history of the *gens* through several key classicists and ethnologists starting in the late eighteenth century.³⁵ Eller's *Gentlemen and Amazons* explores ethnological theories of prehistoric, matriarchal history and the influence of classical material, especially the myth of the Amazons, on such theories.³⁶ Tuori's recent book *Lawyers and Savages* addresses the crucial place of the classics in the development of legal anthropology, especially in the rise and demise of legal evolutionism.³⁷ Turner's sweeping history of philology treats the classics in a broader discussion of the role of comparative philology in anthropology.³⁸ These are significant and telling examples of the interaction between the classics and anthropology; they are pieces of a complicated and lengthy interaction.

Towards a History of the Classics and Early Anthropology

The chapters in this volume were collected to illuminate this shared intellectual inheritance further. They explore several different points of interaction between the classics and anthropology, and they emphasize the long-lasting

33 Ackerman 2008.

34 Robinson 2002.

35 Smith 2006.

36 Eller 2011.

37 Tuori 2015.

38 Turner 2014, 328–56.

influence this early relationship has had on both classical scholarship and the social sciences. Although the picture formed of this shared history is not without its contrasts, outliers, and variation, several prominent themes emerge across the chapters: the interactive nature of the relationship; the rise and fall of comparativism and evolutionism; the potency of “classical thinking” and the contextual adaptation of classical information and theories; the role and impact of colonialism; the significance of fieldwork as a point of fusion and fission between the classics and anthropology; and legacies in current scholarship in the classics and social sciences.

Interaction over Reception

The chapters in this volume reveal the interactive nature of the relationship between the classics and the multifarious pursuits of early anthropology. Indeed, it is increasingly hard to talk about *reception*, when what comes to the fore is a picture of *interaction*. A lack of firm or, in some cases, any disciplinary boundaries is one of the major factors in this relationship. Anthropological and classical interests either had not yet diverged or were merged. For some figures discussed in the volume, a discipline of any sort did not exist. Fr. Joseph François Lafitau’s observations on the Iroquois in Quebec were written in the early eighteenth century, over a century and a half before the social sciences began to form as disciplines. Nevertheless, his work anticipated some of the features of the classical and ethnographic comparativism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁹ Founding figures of anthropology, such as Morgan, Tylor, and even Boas and Malinowski, must all be placed at the very beginnings of the professional practice of anthropology. It was during their lifetimes that anthropology’s methods and subjects began to be debated, integrated, and then delineated as a discipline.

Even once professional or disciplinary boundaries began to form, they were blurry. Try, for example, to pin down Frazer and his legacy—in the classics, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, folklore, etc. He appears frequently in this volume because his career, interests, and approaches crossed emerging disciplinary lines. We can also see such elusiveness later on in the careers of Ernesto de Martino and Milman Parry (both explored in this volume).⁴⁰

This interaction, however, cannot be explained solely by the presence or lack of disciplinary boundaries. There were avenues of interaction beyond non-existent or straddled disciplinary lines. Classicists, ethnologists, and ethnographers all drew on data adapted from ancient texts and contemporary

39 Solez, this volume.

40 See Salvo, this volume; De Vet, this volume.

ethnographic material, usually mediated through the work of others—this was particularly true of the comparativism that came into vogue in the late nineteenth century. Classicists and early anthropologists also shared common subject matter, especially in religion and social practices like feasting and gift-giving. They also borrowed and adapted theories and interpretative frameworks. Progressivism and social evolutionism had classical as well as scientific roots, and anthropological thinking about the “other” informed classical views of ancient “others.” Even methodology crossed back and forth. Philological approaches, honed in the study of ancient texts, informed comparative linguistics. The methods of ethnographic fieldwork, so crucial to anthropological self-definition, influenced key ideas in classical scholarship. Sharing and adapting data, theories, and methods are part of the historical ebb and flow of classical and anthropological interaction.

Comparativism and Evolutionism

Comparativism dominated much of the early relationship between the classics and anthropology. In the eighteenth century, some comparativism treated the Greeks and Romans as near equivalents of peoples encountered on colonial and imperial ventures. The Jesuit missionary Lafitau wove the Greeks into his account of the Iroquois, using classical images to explain the customs of aboriginal peoples in Quebec and vice versa.⁴¹ Christian Gottlob Heyne turned to “savage” customs to explain ancient Greek ones.⁴² However, this equalizing comparativism was less common than classical exceptionalism, which cast classical civilization as a unique conduit or model of civilization. Such exceptionalism was fundamental in the emerging field of *Altertumswissenschaft*. Ancient Greece and Rome were thought to possess a uniqueness in achievement and legacy that made them incomparable to anyone else.⁴³

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, comparing the classical civilizations with others became standard practice in social evolutionary ethnology. Such comparisons were part of the broader intellectual trend of evolutionism inspired by developments in the natural and geological sciences and by new knowledge of the vast length of human prehistory. Primitivism was an essential element of this comparativism. It posited that certain contemporary peoples lived like the earlier ancestors of more advanced peoples, either because they were unchanging or had not yet progressed along an evolutionary scale. Such primitive peoples could help ethnologists

41 Solez, this volume.

42 Short and Bettini, this volume.

43 Short and Bettini, this volume. See also Ackerman 2008, 149–50.

illuminate their own earlier ancestors and fill in the long age of human pre-history. Ethnologists compared these primitive “others” with the classical civilizations to work out universalizing stages of human progress. Most often Greece and Rome occupied a linking stage on the evolutionary scale. Situated between contemporary savages and civilized Europeans, they exemplified the progress from primitivism to civilization.

This was the dominant role for the classics in late nineteenth-century ethnology, and the ancient world often supplied important points of comparison and contrast. Morgan built a universal scheme of human social evolution by comparing the Greeks, Romans, and aboriginal peoples, mostly the Iroquois. In particular, he contrasted the features of their respective kinship systems and political institutions. He placed the Greeks and Romans developmentally after the Iroquois (who represented a stage of savagery), seeing an advance from savagery to civilization in the course of classical history.⁴⁴ Morgan was intrigued by the evolutionism he read classical texts, especially the poetry of Horace and Lucretius. His interest in Roman poetry, however, was also rooted in contemporary experiences of progress, about which he had some unease. As *Daniel Noah Moses* argues in this volume, Morgan’s anthropology integrated the values and ideas found in his favourite Roman poets: natural and social evolution and Epicureanism. Exploring the lifelong relationship Morgan had with Lucretius and Horace, Moses reveals how he shared the ethos expressed by these poets regarding wealth and the life well lived. Morgan, in his anthropology and writings, crafted a social critique of contemporary commercialism and triumphant Americanization. He did this even as he celebrated and prospered from it, just as the classical poets critiqued the world of the Roman Empire.

According to Tylor, more and less advanced stages of development were discernible even within a given people. He called the similarities between stages “survivals” because they were holdovers from a less advanced stage.⁴⁵ Like Morgan, he linked his evolutionary thinking back to the classics and to Lucretius, in particular. He argued that Lucretius had essentially been correct in his poetic account of human progress, but had simply lacked the data. This evidence could be supplied, the data populated, by ethnographic studies of primitive peoples.

Melissa Funke’s chapter on colour terms reveals an interesting nexus of comparativism in classical philology, cultural linguistics, and physical and social evolutionism. She traces the importance of Homeric Greek in the scientific, linguistic, and anthropological understanding of colour terms and colour perception from the late eighteenth century forward. Comparative cultural linguists seized

44 See Varto 2014, 514–19.

45 Gettel, this volume.

on the absence of certain colour terms in Homeric Greek. They compared these with other absences of colour terms noted among ethnographic populations. From such comparisons, they theorized a neat evolutionary scheme for the development of colour perception: more advanced peoples recognized more colours than less advanced peoples. Homeric Greek was treated as the spoken language of a primitive people before they became civilized (in the classical period). Funke shows how even recent theories about colour perception are still supported by nineteenth-century comparative work with Homeric colour terms.

In the late nineteenth century, Otis Mason constructed “progress of the races” displays at the Smithsonian and the World’s Fairs. In her chapter on Mason’s displays, *Rebecca Futo Kennedy* shows how he crafted them by combining prominent theories of social evolution (such as Morgan’s) with the ancient theory of environmental determinism. Mason subscribed to an environmental determinism informed by ancient Hippocratic texts (like *Airs, Waters, Places*) and situated in contemporary evolutionism and colonial aims. Such displays of “progress” undergirded the systematic eradication of so-called lesser races, presenting loss and destruction as something inevitable and necessary for progress.

A significant change in anthropology’s comparative methods and aims began to take place in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Interest shifted from the sweeping, comparative enterprises of ethnology, towards the more contextual, fieldwork-driven projects of ethnography.⁴⁶ In this contested environment, evolutionary models came increasingly under attack. Boas and Malinowski (most notably, but not alone) challenged the racist underpinnings and consequences of social evolutionary theory and they exposed its weak support in the empirical evidence. They refuted common evolutionary ideas with evidence garnered through participant fieldwork. Malinowski and Robert Lowie, in particular, worked to dispel myths like primitive communism and primitive promiscuity and polygamy (which helped cast certain peoples as undeveloped or uncivilized) as European error and assumption.⁴⁷ Such theories were unfounded in the evidence and morally insupportable. Morgan had recognized the destructive power of progress, but Boas, Malinowski and their students saw the destructive power of both progress and the *idea* of progress.⁴⁸

The focus on context and cultural relativism and the corresponding emphasis Boas and Malinowski and others put on participant fieldwork would change—not end—early anthropology’s relationship with the classics.

46 See Tuori 2015, 101–49, for an overview of the shift towards functionalism, contextual approaches, and participant fieldwork, as exemplified by Boas and Malinowski.

47 Tuori 2015, 113–15.

48 Similarly, Tuori 2015, 102.

A shift occurred in the use and place of classical data. Some anthropologists began treating Greece and Rome (if they treated them at all), not as civilized exemplars in universalizing social evolutionary schemes, but as comparative “others.” In *The Gift*, Marcel Mauss would turn to the ancients to help him explain the practice and concept of gift-giving observed in ethnographic field-work.⁴⁹ The Cambridge Ritualists, a group of classicists who trod the hardening line between the classics and anthropology from 1875 to 1925, turned to ethnography to access the mindset of the ancient Greeks and Romans.⁵⁰ Frazer, for instance, believed that ethnography furnished useful examples for classicists; through ethnography, he could better understand Greek and Roman religion and discover universal elements of early religion. The Ritualists thus treated Greece and Rome as “primitive,” comparable to the peoples represented in contemporary ethnographic studies from around the world.

It was in the study of religion that associating ancient Greece and Rome with contemporary “primitive” peoples became especially popular. *Ailsa Hunt’s* chapter examines how classicists and early anthropologists in late nineteenth-century Britain and Germany were interested in the sacred trees of “primitive” religions. Early anthropologists, arguing that religion begins with animistic conceptions of the world, found support for this theory in ancient and contemporary “savage” beliefs in sacred trees. Hunt shows how these “animists” overemphasized and aggrandized the scant evidence of sacred trees in ancient Rome to bolster their theory. They considered the Roman worship of sacred trees to be an example of primitive fetishism, equating it with Catholic idolatry. Thus, Hunt also reveals the Protestant and evolutionary framework underlying the study of sacred trees, which cast ancient Roman religion and contemporary Catholicism as primitive and materialistic.

Many classicists resisted this equation of the classical civilizations with “primitive” peoples.⁵¹ They did so for reasons of evidence, arguing that the ancient Greeks and Romans were too dissimilar to contemporary indigenous peoples to be compared. Underlying evidentiary reasons, however, were dominant paradigms of social evolution, racial supremacy, and classical exceptionalism: the glories of Greece and Rome, the foundations of Western Civilization, could not be “primitive.” The Greeks and Romans were often understood to be unique lights of civilization amid the general barbarity of the ancient world and, therefore, incomparable in any type of scheme. Disciplinary boundaries were drawn thicker. Classical primitivism, thus, became a site of fission

49 See De Vet, this volume.

50 See Ackerman 2008. In this volume, see Short and Bettini, Stewart, and Hunt.

51 See Ackermann 2008, 149–50.

between the classics and anthropology, even as the Cambridge Ritualists represented a major site of fusion.

Many of this volume's chapters highlight problems with nineteenth- and early twentieth-century comparative approaches. The criticisms range from their oversimplification and aggrandizement of evidence to their foundation in Eurocentric social evolutionary schemes. Several authors cite early comparativism's links (sometimes direct) to theories that reinforced or enabled racial injustices, colonial destructions, and racist atrocities.⁵² Comparativism using the classics has a chequered past. If we have a problem historically with comparativism, can we do it at all? If so, how? *William Short and Maurizio Bettini's* co-authored chapter in this volume asks these questions. The authors query how and why comparativism has tended to be regarded dismally in the classics and propose a new comparativism. They give an overview of the history and current circumscription of comparative approaches, before suggesting, as a way forward, a method by which comparativism might now be done. Short and Bettini suggest that, rather than predetermining the meaning of any specific cultural configuration by crafting an analogy, a new comparativism can actively construct meaning through juxtapositions and comparisons of difference.

Classical Thinking in Contemporary Contexts

The dominance of the classics in European and North American educations throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a major factor in the relationship between the classics and early anthropology. It may be old hat, but it is nonetheless true. Education and knowledge beyond the confines of the academic discipline encouraged and facilitated comparative projects. Consider the ease and casualness with which several of the figures in this volume, like Lafitau, Morgan, Tylor, and Frazer, pull out classical examples. A classical education, especially one shared by readers, could provide a treasure trove of ready and recognizable comparanda and analogues. In his chapter, *Kevin Solez* shows how embedded the classics are in the anthropology of feasting. The classics prefigured feasting practices in ethnographic accounts such as Lafitau's descriptions of the Iroquois and Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Solez argues that it is partly because of (not despite) this fundamental link with the ancients, that anthropological theory and ethnography have interpretive power for the classics and can help round out our knowledge of Greco-Roman antiquity.

52 In this volume, see Moses, Varto, Kennedy, De Angelis, and Short and Bettini.

The classics rendered patterns of thinking—patterns derived from antiquity, moulded by context, and embedded in European and North American intellectual and educational traditions. In this volume, Short and Bettini even suggest that Roman culture has continued to infuse Western literature and thinking so much that one might argue that Roman culture is still alive.⁵³ The classics often provided early anthropology with a lens through which to see others or a framework in which to set knowledge of “new” peoples. They supplied key terminologies. They functioned as heuristic tools, measuring sticks, and prototypes for typologies to explicate and situate ethnographic “others.” Greece and Rome were like and not like other peoples: they furnished both data that could be compared and interpretive tools and dominant ways of thinking. The classics played the game and set the rules.

This dual role did not, however, mean that the classics remained unchanged in early anthropological thinking. The interaction between the classics and early anthropology was often an exchange of information, ideas, or interpretative frameworks. Whether from classical texts and scholarship or from ethnology and contemporary ethnography, they were seldom exchanged untouched or unmoulded. Old ideas and patterns of thinking could be adapted in new contexts and for contemporary aims.

Morgan's anthropology was informed by the combination of his reading in the classics and his American experience. He fused the study of ancient civilizations and contemporary aboriginal peoples toward a grand synthesis in *Ancient Society*. My chapter (*Emily Varto's*) on Morgan's ethnological masterwork, *Ancient Society*, reveals how he used the classics, largely mediated by the large narrative classical histories of the nineteenth century, to explicate and situate other peoples in his grand ethnological scheme. Morgan viewed his early ethnographic inquiries through a classical lens that was affected by his experience with aboriginal peoples in North America, especially the Iroquois. This American experience led him to challenge some of the standard interpretations of classical history. It was through this tinted classical lens that Morgan observed the progress of all human civilization and recognized the inevitability and destruction inherent in what he understood as progress. In this endeavour, he was not afraid to do his own interpretive work in the classics, even if he contradicted the giants of classical scholarship along the way.⁵⁴ He found Maine's classically trained mind too definite and blamed Maine's European ignorance of the Iroquois for his reticence to accept Morgan's new

53 Short and Bettini, this volume.

54 Moses, this volume; Varto, this volume; Varto 2014, 518.

interpretations of early kinship. He also criticized George Grote and Barthold Georg Niebuhr's interpretations of classical history for their European monarchic bent. His interpretations were American and informed by American experience even as they were rooted in the ancient world.

Tylor's influential concept of "culture" was honed in scholarship on Romanization, as *Eliza Gettel* shows in her chapter. Tylor defined "culture" holistically, as consisting of cultural elements like belief, art, morals, etc. As cultures developed, some elements, like language and superstition, could survive as remnants of an earlier stage of civilization. Tylor's formulations of "culture" and "cultural change" integrated ancient and modern evolutionism and classical and ethnographic evidence. These ideas were moulded in studies of Roman Britain, then the purview of prehistory in British universities. Tylor's conceptions of "culture" and "cultural change" then found traction among the Cambridge Ritualists. In their studies of Romanization, they adopted and adapted the holistic idea of "culture" as a key interpretative concept. Tylor's formulation, as shaped by the meeting of prehistory, the classics, and early anthropology, continues to have an impact on thinking about cultural identity and change in the Roman empire.

Contemporary contexts and interests often resulted in differing disciplinary interpretations. *Sandra Blakely* explores the relationship between the classics and anthropology through the different models that nineteenth-century German and French anthropologists applied to the mystery cult of the Great Gods of Samothrace. Both were built on the ancient mythological record and rooted in their own time and place. Embedded in nineteenth-century *Volkskunde*, Germanic interpretations associated the mythological metalworking inhabitants of Samothrace with the metalworking dwarves of Germanic folklore. French studies linked the mysteries with contemporary metalworkers, reflecting the growing French labour movement and the importance of ironworkers and their guilds in Paris of the late nineteenth century. Both of these models have enjoyed remarkable longevity in the classics despite their lack of support in subsequent archaeological and historical investigations of the island of Samothrace. These rites thus epitomize a point of connection and distance between anthropology and the classics. The archaeological and epigraphical studies pursue an *histoire événementielle*. However, the German and the French studies, rooted in contemporary interests, pursued an *histoire de mentalité*, highlighting and closing the gap between ancient initiates and modern investigators.

The development of the myth of prehistoric matriarchy, which *Cynthia Eller* explores in this volume, also reveals a story of contemporary interests and disciplinary connections and divisions. In this history, Eller shows how

contemporary interests and concerns shaped how the idea of prehistoric matriarchal society was accepted and rejected in different fields with differing evidence. In the mid-nineteenth century, Bachofen found evidence for his theory of prehistoric matriarchy in ancient Mediterranean religion. The idea took further shape as nineteenth-century ethnologists constructed social evolutionary schemes using the theory of primitive matriarchy. Later British anthropologists, however, only loosely employed classical sources in accounts of matriarchy. They also deemphasized the importance of goddesses in their theories of matriarchal prehistory. At the turn of the century, as part of its shift away from evolutionism, anthropology began to distance itself from common evolutionary ideas like the myth of matriarchal prehistory. At the same time, however, Frazer, Harrison, and the Cambridge Ritualists revived the theory. They reintroduced classical sources and religion as they sought to find traces of matriarchal customs in the classical civilizations. Largely through their intervention, the idea of prehistoric matriarchy was adopted by some feminist thinkers in the early twentieth century. It became an important symbol or myth in struggles for women's recognition, rights, and privileges. Thus, prehistoric matriarchy remained a potent idea even as it was increasingly rejected in anthropological and classical scholarship.

Colonialism

The social evolutionism, primitivism, and comparativism present in much of the interaction between the classics and early anthropology developed as part of and often supported European imperialism and colonization. Several of the book's chapters point to this connection. Colonial and imperial projects across the globe supplied or gave access to much of the early comparative data that would shape both disciplines and their relationship to each other.

Some of the legacies of this meeting are difficult. Lafitau made his observations about the Iroquois while part of the missionary project of converting aboriginal peoples in North America. Morgan also has a difficult legacy. He had deep respect for aboriginal ways, sought to make direct inquiries, regretted what he understood would be lost to progress, and sometimes advocated for Iroquois rights. His writing, however, betrays a romanticized view of aboriginal peoples, a paternalistic attitude, and a firm belief in social evolution and the inevitability and ultimate promise of progress.

The reception of Morgan's work is, perhaps, even more troubling. It came to be popular among government officials and scholars who classified indigenous peoples as "behind" on an evolutionary scale and, therefore, inferior and in need of "progress." The cruel and devastating results of such thinking and policies remain with indigenous peoples around the world today. Such potent

evolutionism is evident in Mason's ethnographic displays at the Smithsonian and World's Fairs. His "progress of the races" displays presented aboriginal peoples as "primitives," "savage" or "barbaric" by nature and geography.⁵⁵ Colonialism and the expansion of the United States across the continent led to the collection of ethnographic objects. The display of these objects in evolutionary paradigms reinforced the supposed justness of the very colonial and expansionist endeavours through which they were acquired.

The classics in North America and Europe were not untouched by this colonial and imperial experience. The classics do not represent, it seems, a purely European import (just as they do not represent a wholly elite endeavour, as the project *Classics and Class* illustrates).⁵⁶ The relationship with anthropology seems to have mediated the impact of colonialism on the classics. Consider the reimportation of "other-thinking" from North America back to Europe. In a chapter on the creation of the classical "other," *Franco De Angelis* asks how the classics were shaped by anthropological thinking about the aboriginal "other," especially as instigated by North American colonialism. How, for example, could a Parisian in the 1840s see "savages" in the Burgundian countryside, if not for the image rendered by colonial "savages"?⁵⁷ De Angelis looks at how anthropological ideas have shaped our understanding of the classical world, specifically, Greek "colonialism" and culture contact. By exploring how nineteenth- and twentieth-century classicists presented ancient "others," De Angelis illustrates how North American colonialism shaped European formulations of the "other" in both the New World *and* the Old World. The classics changed in the context of North American colonialism, but that change did not stay in North America. The chapter thus takes us beyond understanding the classics in North America as one-way European importation and imposition. It gestures towards the variant meanings and vectors of influence of the classics in North America, about which there remains much to explore.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is one of the key and frequent motifs in the relationship between the classics and anthropology, crucial to its ebb and flow. At times, it serves as a common cause or methodological link, uniting the study of ancient peoples with anthropological pursuits. At other times, it drives a wedge between the disciplines, revealing disciplinary prejudices and differing aims and methods.

55 Kennedy, this volume.

56 Hall and Stead n.d., *Classics and Class*.

57 Weber 1976, 3; De Angelis, this volume.

Already in nineteenth-century ethnology, the discoveries rendered through rudimentary fieldwork (direct inquiries and the accounts of colonial officials and missionaries) could challenge dominant frameworks. Morgan's inquiries among the Iroquois, for example, made him rethink classical history as he had received it.⁵⁸ The "fieldwork revolution" that occurred in anthropology in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, brought significant challenges to dominant methods and theories. Boas, Malinowski, and their students, in particular, emphasized the importance of ethnographic fieldwork for the growing discipline of anthropology.⁵⁹ Second-hand accounts, usually made by amateurs like colonial officials or missionaries, were inadequate to understand a people. Inquiries like Morgan's were not enough, and classical texts were not the purview of the ethnographer. This fieldwork revolution, with its focus on evidence and cultural context, spelled the eventual demise of universalizing evolutionary ethnology. As noted above, evidence gathered by participant fieldwork, which showed many of the assumptions of evolutionary thinking to be false, undermined its sweeping theories of human progress. As Tuori notes, there was little in the way of grand synthesis in the ethnography of Boas and Malinowski.⁶⁰ Without a place in evolutionary schemes, classical antiquity's role in anthropology would change.

Ethnographic fieldwork became a catalyst for fission between anthropologists and classicists. It drove a wedge between the Cambridge Ritualists, who would treat the Greeks and Romans as "primitives" and use ethnography to understand ancient mindsets, and the classicists who objected. It also resulted in the decline in the use of classical data for comparison, as the contextual focus of ethnography edged out evolutionary ethnology and its sweeping themes.

Fieldwork, however, could also be a site of fusion. Frazer's treatment of Pausanias had an impact on archaeological fieldwork, which *Daniel Stewart* explores as part of Frazer's multifarious legacy in the classics and anthropology. Frazer, countering the largely German opinion that Pausanias was useless, transmitted both Pausanias' texts and his methods. There was truth in Pausanias' text discernible in the material remains of antiquity. His ancient methods of ethnography, analogy, and autopsy were transmitted through Frazer's translation and commentary, and are shared by contemporary approaches to the material landscape. Frazer's interpretation of Pausanias' text, as Stewart argues, is thus integral to the birth of classical archaeology and the development of its current methods.

58 Varto, this volume.

59 See Tuori 2015, 101–49.

60 Tuori 2015, 106–7.

Following the fieldwork revolution, there was some estrangement between the classics and anthropology. Several chapters in this volume, however, suggest that this was neither complete nor universal across academic traditions. Some scholars straddled or ignored disciplinary boundaries even once they had hardened. And, while Greece and Rome may have become less critical for comparative data, the influence of theories and methods continued to flow. This was particularly true of the influence of ethnographic fieldwork and its methods. Some classicists in the early and mid-twentieth century saw that contemporary ethnography could be useful for answering classical questions. Fieldwork, which once drove a wedge, became a renewed link.

Milman Parry, although originally a student of the classics (and one of the most famous classicists ever), trained in Paris with Marcel Mauss at Institut d'ethnologie. In Paris, he was schooled in the theories and fieldwork methods of Mauss and Durkheim. *Thérèse A. de Vet* explores the impact Mauss had on anthropology and the classics both in and beyond his work on reciprocity in *The Gift*. A key figure in the story is Parry. Mauss' emphasis on fieldwork and his articulation of its methods encouraged Parry to answer age-old Homeric questions with ethnographic fieldwork. Parry applied these methods in his now famous fieldwork in contemporary Yugoslavia. Parry also drew on Durkheim's idea of mechanical/traditional and organic/modern societies. Parry saw oral poetry—full of formulae and repetition and heavy with tradition—as the output of a mechanical society, as opposed to literate poetry—creative and original and uniquely authored—in organic societies. Thus, Parry honed his transformative Oral Theory of Homeric poetry in a meeting of the classics and ethnography. It is difficult to fathom what Homeric studies would look like today without Parry and Lord's theory and the methods and theories of French ethnography that Parry picked up in Paris in the early twentieth century.

Anthropology and the ancient world seem to have enjoyed a long relationship in Italian scholarship in the twentieth century. Figures like Ernesto de Martino (1908–1965) fruitfully and influentially blended contemporary ethnographic fieldwork with ancient evidence. In her chapter on de Martino, *Irene Salvo* outlines how he combined the classics with ethnography. He used the classics to help interpret his fieldwork on funeral rites, magic, and tarantism in Southern Italy. Classical antiquity permeates his scholarship. Examining how de Martino studied evil eye in Graeco-Roman culture and Southern Italian contemporary folklore, Salvo reveals how his deep knowledge of ancient Greece and Rome informed the analysis of his ethnographic fieldwork. However, de Martino understood the similarities differently from earlier evolutionary comparativists and primitivists. Ancient religious practices and beliefs could

elucidate contemporary practices and beliefs, but they should not be treated as direct equivalents or unchanging historical antecedents.

Legacies of a Shared History

The chapters in this volume explore how the historical interaction between the classics and early anthropology affects current and future research. How does it shape our ideas about humanity and classical antiquity and inform the methods we employ? Many authors were inspired to explore the roots of common theories and assumptions by their projects based in the ancient world—projects on kinship, ancient religion and worship, geography, feasting and foodways, even colour. It is hard not to find early anthropologists when looking into the history of scholarship. They are there when we probe our methods and approaches.

What are the implications of this historical relationship? For example, what are the consequences of the dual role of the classics in early ethnology, as both data and interpretative tool? Does it produce a circularity that we have to be wary of, especially when turning to current anthropological or sociology theory or examples? If the prototypes of anthropological or sociological typologies and theories are classical at their origins (and potentially based on radically outdated scholarship), does that compromise classicists' ability to draw on them now? If classical exemplars and comparisons found in anthropological work reveal an underlying connection or common interest, maybe this deep connection to the classics makes anthropology excellently suited to illuminate the ancient world? Or, perhaps, the methods and approaches of early anthropology and the classics are not all that far removed from our own, and we are part of this continuum? These are difficult questions to answer definitely, but they are important to explore, given how much current classical scholarship now turns to the methods and theories of the social sciences. The authors in this volume come to differing conclusions about the consequences of this shared intellectual history; all, however, recognize and illustrate its significance for current scholarship.

The shared history of the classics and early anthropology has an impact beyond disciplinary borders. Recent discourse has queried the classics' complicity in racist ideologies, role in the American "culture wars," and recognition of diversity in antiquity and the modern discipline.⁶¹ It seems timely, then, to consider what the relationship between the classics and anthropology has

61 Among many, see, e.g., Adler 2016; Zuckerberg 2016; Bond 2017; Daniels 2017; McCoskey 2017; Morley 2017.

given to the world, for good and ill. How we speak of and define “culture” is part of this story. How it became an analytical category or tool in disciplines beyond anthropology and the classics is bound up in Tylor’s classically infused definition. Progressivism, evolutionism, and primitivism also owe a debt, for good or ill, to the classics. It is a debt owed to both ancient accounts of human progress and the role the classics played in explicating “the civilized” and “the primitive.” With an eye to current dissatisfaction with the promise of progress, Moses envisions Morgan trapped in the “iron cage” of modernity. In that cage, he is a cellmate of Lucretius and Horace, each a prosperous participant in progress and a witness to its destructive power.

One of the legacies of this interaction is legal primitivism and the evolutionary mythology of modern law, which developed out of the legalism and institutionalism of early classical scholarship and anthropology. Legal minds populate the early histories of the classics and the social sciences. Morgan and Maine were trained lawyers. The giants of early classical scholarship were often lawyers and politicians, like Barthold Georg Niebuhr, George Grote, William Ewart Gladstone, and Theodor Mommsen. They were captivated by ancient legal and institutional history. Early classical scholarship and early anthropology were rife with legalism and institutionalism that focused on the development of laws and institutions and emphasized the growth of the state and its power. Early ethnology, like that of Maine and Morgan, blended the development of religious, political, and social evolution with the development of law.⁶² It helped create what Fitzpatrick calls the mythology of modern law, in which the “supposed development of Roman law ... becomes a basis for condemning all societies but the progressive few.”⁶³

Ancient history contributed much to this evolutionary project, as Tuori has recently illustrated.⁶⁴ Maine was a trained classicist as well as a jurist and used Roman history, into which he read the clear development from kinship groups to political institutions, to formulate his idea of a shift from status to contract.⁶⁵ Ancient Roman law helped determine for Morgan what was normal or to be expected in human social organization.⁶⁶ Legal evolutionism and primitivism—the myth of modern law—linked the emergence of law with shifts towards civilization or modernity (as in Maine’s “status to contract”)

62 On the history of legal evolutionism and primitivism, see Fitzpatrick 1992; Tuori 2015, 57–100.

63 Fitzpatrick 1992, 103.

64 Tuori 2015, 57–100.

65 Varto 2014, 508–11.

66 See Trautmann 2008, 36–57; Varto, this volume.

according to a paradigm set by Roman law. In the classics, we may see the effect of this legalism and institutionalism in an early and sustained disciplinary interest in the formation of laws, institutions, and states. In particular, we may see it in our obsession with the *polis*, often privileged in scholarship above other forms of political and human organization.

Recent classical scholarship seems to make much less of an impact in the social sciences than the social sciences currently make on the classics. Working knowledge of the classical languages and classical civilizations has become rare in the social sciences, but classical concepts and images do remain. There are also references to core ideas, like *polis*, that are traceable back to the ancients. The information about ancient models (the historical precedents or prototypes) of these concepts, however, often seems out of sync with the evidence and interpretations of current classical scholarship. An anthropology textbook on kinship, for example, cites Morgan referencing Grote on classical kinship systems. The book questions the universality of Morgan's kinship typologies, but it does not challenge Morgan's or Grote's descriptions and interpretations of Greek and Roman kinship, as if they are still considered accurate for classical antiquity (they are not).⁶⁷

In the twentieth century, as Funke notes in this volume, Homeric Greek remained important in cross-cultural studies of colour terms and perception, but its inclusion became increasingly haphazard. Anthropological studies made odd links between Homeric words and English colours and, crucially, did not account for the unusual literary nature of the Homeric dialect.⁶⁸ A late nineteenth-century understanding of the Homeric dialect lingered in the anthropological discourse, despite enormous transformations in the study of Homeric poetry and language in the twentieth century.⁶⁹

Some sociological representations of the historical Greek *polis* and *metropolis* are likewise outdated. The entry on "metropolis" in *Blackwell's Encyclopedia of Sociology* demonstrates precisely the problem of translation that De Angelis draws attention to in this volume: translating Greek *apoikia* as colony (through the medium of the Roman word *colonia*).⁷⁰ The sociological entry is based on early scholarship that envisioned Greek colonization as directly analogous to

67 Stone 2006, 76–77. See Varto 2010, 85.

68 Literary as in not the spoken dialect of a living people.

69 See Funke, this volume.

70 See De Angelis, this volume. See also, Terrenato 2005, 62–67; De Angelis 2009, 49–54; Van Dommelen 2012. Although the bibliography recommended here is recent, the error of equating Greek *apoikia* with Roman *colonia* and either with European colonies has long been recognized (since at least the 1960s).

European colonization. A Greek *metropolis*, it claims, was the “apex of a chain of lesser settlements” and “continually enriched by its control and exploitation of distant colonies, hinterland, or commercial empire.”⁷¹ In the same entry, the historical Greek *polis* is defined as “a political community where strangers could gather as equals to forge a new identity around ideals of citizenship transcending the limited ties of family and tribe.”⁷² This definition has its roots in the problematic evolutionary ethnology that linked the *polis* with the emergence of civilization and understood its formation as the destruction or transcendence of family bonds for the establishment of the state.⁷³ It sounds like Maine’s formulation of status to contract, but little like descriptions of Athens, Sparta, or Corinth written recently by ancient historians. Indeed, this idea could be torn from the pages of the classically infused ethnologies of Morgan, Maine, or Fustel De Coulanges in the late nineteenth century, but one would be hard-pressed to find it in the work of the Copenhagen Polis Institute or recent histories of the Greek early Iron Age.⁷⁴

My point here is not that theoretical terms and concepts like *polis* and *metropolis* (which social sciences have found useful) must be defined according to their ancient manifestations. (It may not matter so much that the theoretical *polis* has no basis in recent historical scholarship, although it might be interesting to see how changes in the classical scholarship might impact sociological and anthropological theory.) Instead, it is problematic when current scholarship’s representations of those ancient historical manifestations (the prototypes of the theoretical *polis* and *metropolis*) are profoundly outdated or demonstrably flawed.

Do these examples merely represent cross disciplinary lag or do they point to a more significant pattern? Could they be a by-product of the early twentieth-century divide over classical primitivism or of the decline in the overall importance of the classics and a classical education in the twentieth century? Classical history and archaeology have come to be influenced quite heavily by sociological and anthropological concerns, approaches, and theories since at least the 1970s, but not vice versa. Sociological and anthropological theory has moved on and been reapplied in the classics, but how classical prototypes, concepts, and examples are understood in the social sciences seems stuck in early twentieth-century scholarship.

71 Dickinson 2007, 2990, referencing Mumford 1938.

72 Dickinson 2007, 1990, referencing Kitto 1964.

73 On the *polis* exemplifying civilization in ethnology, see Varto 2014.

74 It took until the 1970s, at least, for Greek history to begin to seriously disabuse itself of social evolutionary schemes of *polis* development.

Classical antiquity nevertheless remains a potent image for social scientists. Livingston, when writing about Durkheim's idea that the social energy generated by ritual activity brings about social cohesion, does as his forebears in the budding social sciences did: he reaches for the ancients. But Livingston's ancients are hypothetical:

Had there been a Macy's in ancient Greece, the parade would no doubt have had balloon representations of Demeter (god of the harvest), Poseidon (god of the sea), Aphrodite (god of beauty), Hermes (god of silk scarves), and of course in the U.S., Hebe (goddess of youth). And all the rest. We're not Athenians. Instead, we throng the streets for icons like Snoopy and Spiderman, Pikachu, Bullwinkle, and Spongebob, but the idea is the same. They are our totems, our gods.⁷⁵

We can appreciate the humour and playfulness of Livingston's image—the complex interactions of an inflatable, anthropomorphic Greek pantheon on strings would be a spectacle worth seeing! But, even leaving balloon deities aside, invoking this hypothetical Athenian parade strikes me as odd. Classicists know that the ancient Athenians had public processions, some of which, like the Panathenaea, are well-known and reasonably well-represented in our sources. We do not need hypothetical Athenians on parade; we have historical examples. And, historically, the ancient Athenians did not seem to parade the images of the gods in groups like balloons bobbing past Central Park.

So, what is Athens doing here? It is not the historical Athens that Livingston reaches for but Athens as an ideal comparative “other,” distant in time and place but recognizable in its ritual behaviours. This imaginary Athenian parade allows the sociologist to cast human ritual activity deep into the past, well away from contemporary New York. In doing so, he provides the ultimate, universalizing exemplar for the binding power of collective ritual action. In invoking the classics for a potent analogy, even a made-up one, Livingston is not unlike his forebears in early anthropology. However, unlike them, he does not mine the ancient historical evidence or classical scholarship for his analogy; he invokes Athens as she must have been but never actually was. (It feels Frazerian, but without the copious references.) Ancient Athens, apparently, is still an evocative exemplar. The classics may no longer be a standard part of the ethnographic storehouse or social scientist's toolkit, but the ancients are still part of the sociological and anthropological imagination.

75 Livingston 2006.

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PART 1

*Primitivism and Progress: The
Classics in Early Ethnology*



Dialogue among Cellmates: Lucretius, Horace, and Lewis Henry Morgan

Daniel Noah Moses

In 1877, the year that Morgan's *Ancient Society* was published, the Lewis Henry Morgan Iron Company in Michigan's Upper Peninsula filed for bankruptcy.¹ During that same year, the ageing anthropologist complained of "a state of usedupness."² Whatever personal variables contributed to this condition, Morgan's scholarly output and state of mind were emblematic of larger social and cultural upheaval. Born in 1818, in Aurora New York, on Cayuga Lake, Morgan spent his life in what had only decades earlier been the territory of the Iroquois Confederacy.³ He studied at Union College in Schenectady (once Mohawk land) and spent his adult years in Rochester, New York, not far from where the last Senecas clung to their homes. Meanwhile, the renamed places of upstate New York—Utica, Rome, Greece, Syracuse, Ithaca, cities settled

¹ I did the bulk of my primary research at the Lewis Henry Morgan archives at the Rush Rhees Library, the University of Rochester, the largest repository of Morgan's correspondence and scholarly notes, drafts and unpublished work. I also did primary research at the Leslie White Archives, the Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan; the Lewis Henry Morgan Archives at Union College, Schenectady, New York, and the Lewis Henry Morgan Archive at the New York Historical Society. In this chapter, I provide selected sources; for more details, please see Moses 2009. In my exploration of the sources that shaped Morgan, I have relied on an annotated guide to his personal library in Trautmann and Kabelac 1994. In writing this chapter, I am indebted to Emily Varto for her unusually thoughtful and committed work as an editor; to Sam Thrope, for his close reading and helpful feedback; and to Laurence Dickey, who first inspired me to explore the history of the ideas expressed in this chapter. I dedicate this essay to my father, Stanley Moses, who died while I was completing it.

² Moses 2009, 36–42.

³ The Iroquois, who were also known as "The League of the Iroquois," called themselves "The People of the Longhouse." They were a confederacy of six geographically based "nations" or "tribes," the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca and Tuscaroras, inhabiting what is today New York State. Morgan's birthplace of Aurora, on the shores of Cayuga Lake, was built on the site of a former Cayuga Village. The Seneca, located the farthest west, facing Lake Erie, and including Morgan's adopted hometown of Rochester, New York, were known as the "Keepers of the Western Door."

in the generation before Morgan's birth—attest to the prominence of the Greek and Roman tradition across the American physical and cultural landscape. As a youth, Morgan's imagination was set on fire both by the peoples his own displaced and by the scenes, heroes, poets and philosophers, of ancient Greece and Rome. In their imaginations, he and his contemporaries walked the Appian Way; they frequented the Forum; bathed in the Tiber; had the particulars of Roman politics at their fingertips and their favourite ancient poems memorized by heart.

Later, as a member of Rochester's business establishment, Morgan represented railroads and served on corporate boards. He invested (with uneven success) in mines. He served as a Republican state legislator and actively pursued high public office. Throughout his life, he was drawn back to scholarly pursuits, and in such pursuits, he made his mark. In the early twenty-first century, one is most likely to encounter Morgan while moving breezily through an anthropology survey course. For academic specialists, he is a dilettante who roamed across intellectual terrain far too vast. His language is laced with terms such as "savagery," "barbarism," and "civilization," now discarded, and subsequent evidence has proven him flatly wrong on countless particulars. If we take a longer view, however, Morgan and his cohort were instigators of an intellectual revolution every bit as important to human self-conception as the Copernican idea that the Earth revolves around the sun. Morgan's life and work are part of what the scholar Thomas Trautmann calls the time revolution.⁴ When Morgan was born, the dominant European and European-American belief about the age of the earth held that it was less than 6,000 years old. The Morgan family Bible contains Ussher's chronology, which dates the origin of the universe to 4004 BCE. Morgan's scholarship must be placed alongside the discoveries in the natural and human sciences that, before Darwin, radically expanded the scale of geological time and human existence. This late nineteenth-century paradigm shift was accompanied by a corresponding shift in values and attitudes about how to live. To put this another way, Morgan and his cohort hit against the biblical narrative of human origins while reviving and strengthening paradigms bequeathed to them by ancient Greece and Rome.

Throughout his life, Morgan maintained a particularly close relationship to the poetry of Lucretius and Horace; he engaged continually with their poems in his work. Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* is a panoramic explication of Epicurean philosophy, natural and social evolution. It offers a vision of the world's creation, the unfolding of the natural and social worlds, in marked

4 Trautmann 1992, 201–18.

contrast to biblical narrative and with a family resemblance to Morgan's anthropological work. In his *Odes*, *Satires*, and *Epistles*, Horace sketched his observations and experiences of life, immortalized his love life, satirized the society around him and shared the wisdom that he gleaned about how to live. As a middle-aged man in Rome on a European tour with his family, Morgan noted with wonderment that he was in what Horace had called *Magna Roma*. He used an epigraph from Horace to introduce *Ancient Society* (1877). Horace—at least the Horace that Morgan knew through poems—was a model for Morgan's own life: a citizen who does his duty when called upon and retreats to his “garden” when he can; a man who cultivated friendship, tranquillity, and the life of the mind, and who confronted death without dwelling on an afterlife.

Morgan's first book, *The League of the Iroquois*, was a pioneering ethnographic study. His second, *The American Beaver and His Works*, was more than just a study of that animal; it was a meditation on animal intelligence and the relationship between human beings and the natural world. In his third book, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, Morgan explored the diversity of human family organization. He invented a new tool for the analysis of the family and society by which he could express and categorize the diversity of family organization, and thereby established kinship studies, a new sub-discipline in the emerging field of anthropology.⁵ At the same time, he expanded the reign of the social and the cultural, at the expense of what had been considered before either natural or transcendent, divinely ordained. In his fourth book, *Ancient Society*, he explored the interplay of technological innovation, family and property relationships, the market and the state; he delved into the structure of primitive societies and the origins of civilization. Morgan's scholarly work helped to enlarge the scope of human possibility by expanding the scale of human existence while at the same time refining the concept of “the social” and the implications of this concept. If categories of family relationships are socially constructed, how much of what individuals take as “natural” is a product of categories imposed upon them by the society into which they are accidentally born? If peoples of previous generations organized their societies in so many different ways, what might be said of generations to come? As a founder of the anthropology subsection of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the first

5 See White 1957; Trautmann 2008. About Morgan's work, the eminent anthropologist, W. H. Rivers wrote, “I do not know of any discovery in the whole range of science which can be more certainly put to the credit of one man than that of the classificatory system of relationship by Lewis Henry Morgan” (quoted in Moses 2009, 194).

anthropologist to serve as the association's president, Morgan is one of the most important social scientists of the nineteenth century—the only American to be cited by arguably the most revolutionary minds of the coming age, Darwin, Marx and Freud.⁶ By exploring what he drew from ancient Roman poetry, particularly from Lucretius and Horace, we have the opportunity to understand how Morgan's work grew in good part from the soil of the Greek and Roman classics. We can trace how he moved further from the Protestant ethos of his ancestors and closer to the worldview embraced by his favourite Latin poems; how he poured his classical education into his pioneering anthropological work; and how this scholarship was a form of quiet yet pointed social criticism.

Primitivist Nostalgia and “The Power of Gain”

In the early 1840s, young Lewis Henry Morgan, a recently minted graduate of Union College living at home with his mother in Aurora, New York, prepared for a career in law and in his spare time translated Horace, Lucretius and Cicero. Having passed the bar but finding it difficult to find legal work, he delivered lectures at his high school alma mater, Cayuga Academy, with titles such as *Essay on the History and Genius of the Grecian Race*. He also became an active member of the Gordian Knot, a literary club at Cayuga Academy.⁷ According to tradition, Gordius, a farmer descended from a Macedonian royal line, was crowned the king of the Phrygians after an oracle told them to crown the first man who appeared before the temple in an ox-cart. Later Gordius' ox-cart was tied with an unusually difficult knot to a post in the centre of the city of Gordium, which the king founded: according to the oracle's prediction, the person who untied the knot would rule Asia.⁸

Evidence for Morgan's interest in American Indians emerges in January 1843 when, after reading Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*, he wrote a lecture for his friends at Cayuga Academy about Anacaona of St. Domingo, a cacique (often translated as “queen”) of the province of Xaragua on the island the Spanish named Hispaniola. Morgan found that “the picture of primitive society in Xaragua, with its “idle and ignorant enjoyment” as drawn

6 Moses 2009, 2. For a larger analysis of the anthropology of Morgan's day, see Stocking 1987.

7 Moses 2009, 36–42.

8 The man who supposedly accomplished this feat was, of course, Alexander the Great. The most detailed version of the Gordius story is in Arrian's account of the campaigns of Alexander (Arr. *Anab.* 2.3). It also appears in Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 18; Ael. *NA* 13.1; Curt. 3.11–18.

by Irving, is irresistibly agreeable.”⁹ On an August night in 1843, members of the Gordian Knot broke into an abandoned Masonic lodge equipped with a new founding myth. “When despotism and tyranny had settled heavily upon the Eastern World” they explained, “Gordius decided to take his Phrygian children west. He took them to the Bhering Straits, thence across to this Western World to the chain of lakes,” and eventually to the land between the Hudson River and Lake Erie, where they settled.¹⁰ Gordius divided the people into six, naming them, in turn, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Tuscaroras, Cayugas, Senecas. Then he “tied up the six strands into the new and mystic knot” that he named the Grand Knot of the Iroquois.¹¹ Soon this new “Knot” was changed to the Grand Order of the Iroquois, a ritualistic fraternity which flourished for about the next four years. As the “warriors” assumed new identities, they took new names. Morgan went by the name Skenandoah after an Iroquois man who had been friendly to the Americans during the Revolution. By integrating the Western classical tradition with an American origin story, Morgan and his friends were part of an attempt to break away from Europe by creating their own romantic history with indigenous Americans as heroic cultural ancestors of the new republic. As heroic ancestors, these Indians were doomed to exit, like Longfellow’s Hiawatha, toward the setting sun. At the same time, just as ancient Greek and Roman writers found barbarian others to hold up as foils to their own peoples, Lewis Henry Morgan found the Iroquois.¹²

While doing research in an Albany bookstore in 1844, the budding scholar bumped into a sixteen-year-old Seneca from the Tonawanda reservation, Hasa-ne-an-da, also known as Ely Parker. Morgan and Parker became friends. Over the course of the following years, Parker regularly invited Morgan to the Tonawanda reservation, outside of Buffalo, where Morgan observed and took careful notes. On the last Saturday of October 1846, Morgan and two of his fellow “warriors” of the white fraternity were initiated as real members of the Iroquois Confederacy. By this time, the ritualistic fraternity was falling apart, and Morgan was on his way to a scholarly career. He dedicated *The League of*

9 Morgan 1843.

10 Moses 2009, 36–42. On the role of Indigenous Americans in nineteenth-century American culture, see Pearce 1953. For a more specific connection to ritualistic fraternities see Deloria 1998. For the relationship to the emerging social sciences, see Beider 1986. For an analysis of the role of ritualistic fraternities, including Morgan’s Grand Order of the Iroquois, see Carnes 1989.

11 Moses 2009, 36–42.

12 Moses 2009, 36–42.

the Ho-Dé-No-Sau-Nee Or Iroquois (1851) to Parker as an acknowledgement of “the fruit of our joint researches.”¹³

In the book, Morgan examined Iroquois family relationships, social structure and various aspects of what we would now call culture and material culture. He approached his subject with respect and attempted to understand the Iroquois on their own terms. At the same time, he drew upon established categories and analogies, on what he knew of the Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, and peppered the book with classical references. For example, he compared Iroquois religious ideas specifically to Platonic, Stoic and Epicurean philosophy. “That the Indian, without the aid of revelation, would have arrived at a fixed belief in the existence of one Supreme Being,” he wrote, “has ever been a matter of surprise and admiration.”¹⁴ In addition to their faith in the Great Spirit, they possessed a rich body of myths “which Hesiod himself would not have disdained.”¹⁵

Such comparisons between peoples separated so far in time and space was possible for Morgan because of his deep belief in what was then the contested idea of monogenesis—the common origin of all human beings—and an accompanying idea, the unity of the human mind. Alongside this bedrock assumption of unity, Morgan’s anthropological fieldwork opened up vistas to the range of human difference and possibility.

The Iroquois—the “People of the Longhouse”—were divided into what Morgan at the time called “nations” (more often called “tribes”), which had contiguous territory, and “tribes” (what Morgan later called “gentes”), which existed within each nation, with their own communal property, homes, offices and duties. The dispersion of the “tribes” across national boundaries “became the means of effecting the most perfect union of separate nations ‘ever devised’ by the wit of man.” He explained that “in the eyes of an Iroquois, every member of his own tribe, in whatever nation, was as much his brother or his sister as if the children of the same mother.”¹⁶ Linguistic distinctions between relatives made among Iroquois, for instance between elder and young siblings, were ignored among white Americans. At the same time, Iroquois ignored distinctions crucial among whites: among Iroquois, “no distinction was made between lineal

13 Morgan wrote in the book’s preface: “To encourage a kinder feeling towards the Indian, founded upon a truer knowledge of his civil and domestic institutions, and of his capabilities for future elevation, is the motive in which this work originated” (Morgan 1851 (1922), ix). For more about the life of Ely Parker, see Armstrong 1978.

14 Morgan 1851 (1922), 146.

15 Morgan 1851 (1922), 144. See Moses 2009, 109–110.

16 Morgan 1851 (1922), 77.

and collateral lines, either in the ascending or the descending series.”¹⁷ What, from the mainstream Euro-American perspective was considered absurd, the young lawyer recognized as extraordinary and significant: the Iroquois tribe, not the father-centred family, was the unit for the accumulation and management of property, ceremonial titles, political offices, ancestral rights and duties. Because the father remained a member of his mother’s tribe while his child was always a member of the wife’s tribe, the Iroquois system established “the perpetual disinheritance of the son.”¹⁸

All of this gave Morgan a window into the structure of a radically different society and culture that, with all its strangeness, embodied values he deeply cherished.¹⁹ “It would be difficult to describe any political society,” he wrote, “in which there was less oppression and discontent, more of individual independence and boundless freedom” than there was among the Iroquois.²⁰ Amid the “individual independence” and “boundless freedom” that Morgan observed in Iroquois society, he was struck by what tied the people together—a “spirit of hospitality”—when he believed was one of its “most attractive features.”²¹ When a male member of an Iroquois tribe, or a neighbour, or even a stranger, called upon a house, it was the duty of the tribal women to provide for him. As Morgan explained, “A stranger would be thus entertained without charge, as long as he was pleased to remain; and a relation was entitled to a home among any of his kindred, while he was disposed to claim it. Under the operation of such a simple and universal law of hospitality, hunger and destitution were entirely unknown among them.”²² The concept of land or labour as commodities to be bought and sold was repugnant to the traditional Iroquois worldview. Members of each tribe worked to improve the common stock, and their fortunes rose and fell together. To illustrate this point, he related in an extended footnote a conversation between Canassatego, a distinguished Onondaga chief, and an Indian interpreter, Conrad Weiser:

‘You know our practice,’ Canassatego said. ‘If a white man, in travelling through our country, enters one of our cabins, we all treat him as I do you. We dry him if he is wet, we warm him if he is cold, and give him meat and drink that he may allay his hunger and thirst; and we spread

17 Morgan 1851 (1922), 81.

18 Morgan 1851 (1922), 80.

19 Moses 2009, 88–104.

20 Morgan 1851 (1922), 131.

21 Morgan 1851 (1922), 318.

22 Morgan 1851 (1922), 319.

soft furs for him to rest and sleep on. We demand nothing in return. But if I go into a white man's house in Albany, and ask for victuals and drink, they say, 'Where is your money?' And if I have none, they say, 'Get out, you Indian dog.'²³

Despite his respect for the Iroquois and later for other indigenous peoples, Morgan believed that they were reactionary compared to the vital and expanding American republic: they stood against the forces of progress embodied by the United States. Just as he sometimes embraced a primitivism familiar to the ancient philosophers and poets, he embraced the view, also rooted in the classical tradition, that primitive man is incomplete: he opposed what he saw as constraints on both individual and social cultivation and development among the Iroquois and other primitive societies. As Cicero wrote, "Wisdom did not herself create man, but took him over in the rough from Nature; it is her task, keeping her eye on Nature, to complete the statue where Nature began."²⁴ While primitive freedoms diminish with the evolution of society, other kinds of freedoms expand. Morgan argued, "It would be unreasonable to seek those high qualities of mind which result from ages of cultivation in such a rude state of existence."²⁵ He believed that the American republic—based on the free exchange of land, labour, and money—would prove triumphant. "Civilization," he wrote,

is aggressive, as well as progressive—a positive state of society, attacking every obstacle, overwhelming every lesser agency, and searching out and filling up every crevice, both in the moral and physical world; while Indian life is an unarmed condition, a negative state, without inherent vitality, and without powers of resistance. The institutions of the red man fix him to the soil with a fragile and precarious tenure; while those of civilized man, in his highest state, enable him to seize it with a grasp that defies displacement.²⁶

Morgan's celebration of the Iroquois and later other "primitive" peoples, even while actively accepting their demise, was facilitated by his deep faith in the American experiment. In *The League*, Morgan argued that the Iroquois must dismantle the tribal structures, break up communal lands and parcel these

²³ Morgan 1851 (1922), 321.

²⁴ Cic. *Fin.* 4.13.34. Translation from Lovejoy and Boas 1997.

²⁵ Morgan 1851 (1922), 133.

²⁶ Morgan 1851 (1922), 108.

lands out to individual families so that individual Iroquois would be free to exercise “those rights of property, and rights of civilization, which are common to ourselves.” A year after the publication of *The League*, in a talk called “Diffusion Against Centralization” at the Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics, he explained what he believed to be the unique success of his young nation. For Morgan, the United States—a middle-class fragment of European society based on liberal principles, freed from feudalism, inherited aristocracy, an impoverished underclass, the centralization of state power—embodied this principle of diffusion. Morgan celebrated the “diffusion of knowledge,” “the diffusion of respectability,” “the diffusion of trade,” and the “diffusion of benevolent sentiments” that he believed was possible in the young republic to an extent unprecedented in world history. “Our Republic,” he told his audience, “is without question, the most sublime political achievement of man since the creation of the world. Strike out slavery, that Russian institution, which has no more right there than Satan had in Paradise, and our country is Paradise regained, as near as infirm humanity can imitate what Omnipotence created.”²⁷

Diffusion of property made the diffusion of everything else possible and assured the triumph of the young republic. Yet Morgan was not blind to dangers:

There is perhaps no question of greater magnitude, when all its bearings are considered, than whether property shall be centralized or diffused. It involves the relation, *first in importance*, which subsists between capital and labor. It carries in its solution the happiness and the destiny of mankind. Centralize property in the hands of the few, and the millions are under the *bondage* of property—a bondage as absolute and deplorable as if their limbs were covered with manacles. Abstract all property from the hands of labor, and you thereby reduce labor to *dependence*; and that dependence becomes as complete a servitude as the master could fix upon his slave. Poverty of intellect, poverty of social affections, poverty of manliness; in a word, poverty of every thing, save the baser passions follow in the train of the servitude of labor. But the diffusion of property casts a bright illumination over the prospects of humanity. Diffuse it throughout the community, and the people are no longer under the bondage of property. It gains its power by centralization; it loses it by diffusion. After it has in some degree fallen into the hands of labor, capital and labor are no longer in opposite ranks, but are mingled together.

27 Morgan 1852, 53. See Moses 2009, 134.

Labor then makes its final escape from servitude, and becomes for the first time really and substantially independent. Industry is then twice blessed; prosperity buds forth like the leaves of spring under the genial sunlight of emancipated labor.²⁸

Morgan was aware that the passage of time could bring troubles to the New World. "The highest test of our republican institutions has not yet come," he wrote, as he wondered what was in store for future generations. "Can they rule and restrain a dense population?"²⁹ For him, the antidote against the centralization of property and the solidification of social classes was constant social mobility, the continual growth of freeholders, of self-made men. Seen from this perspective, the Indian policy that he advocated, based upon the dismantling of the communal structures of the tribe and replacing them with private property and the nuclear family, was part of his broader vision of a good society.³⁰ Such a society, of course, was based on the relentless increase of inexpensive land—which was dependent on the conquest of societies such as the Iroquois.

Morgan recognized that American expansion across the continent was driven by dissatisfaction with the status quo, the desire for more, which was rooted in values, in a state of mind, in behaviour, that was largely rejected by, even abhorrent to, the various schools of classical philosophy. Socrates and his students down through the ages agreed that "those engaged in commerce for money thus have a propensity to *pleonexia* (greediness or overreaching); they tend to devote their lives to gaining more and more without limit or reflective purpose."³¹ Pocock wrote specifically of the republican tradition constituted by those who believed that "society as an engine for the production and multiplication of goods was inherently hostile to society as the moral foundation of the personality."³² Much the same could be said about the ancient Epicureans and Stoics, and intellectual descendants of Aristotle, of Plato, of Diogenes. In *The League of the Iroquois* Morgan contrasted the ambition and desire that he saw as a critical ingredient in the success of the American republic with what he observed among the Iroquois. Focused on the pecuniary aspects of ambition, he drew on his favourite classical poets and offered a multilayered critique of what drove his own civilization to succeed.

28 Morgan 1852.

29 Morgan 1852.

30 For development of this argument, see Moses 2009.

31 Muller 2003.

32 Pocock 1975, 501, as quoted in Coser 1996, x1.

The “singular trait in the character of the red man,” Morgan explained, was that he “never felt the power of gain.” This power “is one of the earliest manifestations of the progressive mind.” It “clears the forest, rears the city, builds the merchantman—in a word, it has civilized our race.”³³ Stuck in the “hunter state” and tied to common property and common social life that also created the freedom and hospitality that Morgan so admired, the Indian never felt this progressive power. Drawing on Latin poetry, Morgan writes about the Indian: “The *auri sacra fames* of Virgil, the *studium lucri* of Horace, never penetrated his nature. This great passion of civilized man, its use and abuse his blessing and his curse, never roused the Indian mind.”³⁴ In this sentence, with its quick and yet weighty allusions, Morgan explains why the Iroquois have not progressed and why they must—even as he inserts a forceful critique against the very motor that he believes is essential for progress. Morgan drew this phrase, *auri sacra fames* (“accursed hunger for gold”), from Book 3 of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Aeneas is telling the story of Polydorus, a Trojan prince, whose father sends him away with some riches to protect them from theft during the anarchy of the Trojan War. Polydorus’ father trusts the Thracian king to look after his son, but the trusted guardian kills the son for the riches. Commenting on the fate of this young prince, Aeneas explains, *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, auri sacra fames?* (To what do you not drive mortal hearts, accursed hunger for gold?)³⁵ If the Virgilian phrase points to the violence, crime and the tragedy caused by greed, the Horatian *studium lucri*, alludes to a poem about simple pleasures of a life not stricken with that “accursed hunger for gold.” It is from Horace’s *Odes* 4.12, an invitation from one friend to another (the poet Virgil, it seems)³⁶ to put aside the pursuit of money (*studium lucri*) to enjoy the spring together. The poem ends:

However, no more delay; forget the pursuit of money;
bear in mind the smoky flames and, while it is still possible,
mix a little folly with your serious concerns.
It’s nice to be silly on the right occasion.³⁷

The poem’s exhortations to leave off cares, enjoy the spring with good friends and wine, and embrace some gentle frivolity, are typical of Horace’s *Odes*. The

33 Morgan 1851 (1922), 131.

34 Morgan 1851 (1922), 131. See Moses 2009, 100.

35 Verg. *Aen.* 3.56–57.

36 Rudd 2004, 251n33.

37 Hor. *Odes* 4.12.25–29. Translation from Rudd 2004.

Rome of both Virgil and Horace's day was the centre of a vast empire made wealthy through commerce and expansion, from which both poets certainly benefited. In Horace's poetry, Morgan found a man who advocated keeping an even keel, while valuing most what cannot be measured by money. *The League* is a brief for capitalism and progress. Yet in 1851, even as he was launching his career as a lawyer at the vanguard of the "Market Revolution," young Mr. Morgan juxtaposed the violent death of the prince in Virgil's story to Horace's depiction of the simple pleasures of friendship and offered an alternative to the tragic consequences of greed illustrated by Virgil. In his recognition of the fragility and pleasures of life, Horace urges his friend to avoid being sensible and serious all of the time. To be sensible and serious, of course, is to focus on productivity. In the soft argument of the poem, Horace—and through him, Morgan—redefined what it means to be rich.³⁸

Morgan: Calvinist or Epicurean?

A descendant of New England Calvinists, Morgan was born into the cultural inheritance of those who arrived with that first religiously inspired wave of conquest. He grew up within the Calvinist tradition of his ancestors who were famous for their work ethic, ascetic productivity, and an inaccessible God who ruled all creation as a despot. Morgan lived his life in "The Burned-Over District" of central and western New York which earned its name because of the intensity of its religious revivals.³⁹ At the same time, he was immersed in specific streams of the Scottish and French Enlightenment (written by those who came from the Calvinist tradition), the genteel Anglo-American culture of his day and the Anglo-American legal tradition. Morgan moved among a specific circle of thinkers. His college professor, President of Union College, Eliphalet Nott, a pious minister, selected the work of Lord Kames (Henry Home) as the core of their college curriculum, not the work of that controversial sceptic, David Hume, against whom Kames was reacting. These two men, among others, set the framework for discussion. Morgan's classical education was mediated by a specific set of American Protestant traditions that transcended partisanship. One can say of Morgan what Jefferson, who owned at least five Latin editions of Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*, said of himself: "I am," he wrote in a letter,

38 Moses 209, 100–3. On the market revolution in the United States, see Sellers 1991.

39 See Cross 1950 (1996); Johnson 1978 (2004).

“an Epicurean.”⁴⁰ Yet, in contrast to Jefferson, Morgan remained conventional in religious practice and expressed beliefs.

It is worth trying to imagine how Morgan squared what he learned in church with Lucretius’ expansive sweep of evolution, a world composed of atoms in constant flux, a rich, unfolding natural order that inspired deep appreciation and pleasure even as it operated according to its own rules, without divine intervention. This tension—these two contrasting worldviews—remained with Morgan throughout his life. Lucretius’ *On The Nature of Things* encouraged a specific ethos that stood in contrast to Sunday school, and which one can also see reflected in Horace’s poems and David Hume’s essay *The Epicurean*.⁴¹ As Greenblatt explains,

In a universe so constituted [as the one Lucretius presents], there is no reason to think that the earth or its inhabitants occupy a central place, no reason to set humans apart from all other animals, no hope of bribing or appeasing the gods, no place for religious fanaticism, no call for ascetic self-denial, no justification for dreams of limitless power or perfect security, no rationale for wars of conquest or self-aggrandizement, no possibility of triumphing over nature, no escape from the constant making and unmaking and remaking of forms. On the other side of anger at those who either peddled false visions of security or incited irrational fears of death, Lucretius offered a feeling of liberation and the power to stare down what had once seemed so menacing. What human beings can and should do, he wrote, is to conquer their fears, accept the fact that they themselves and all the things they encounter are transitory, and embrace the beauty and pleasure of the world.⁴²

40 Greenblatt 2011, 262–63. Morgan favoured an active government role in fostering industry and development and supported the political opponents of those who spoke in the name of the venerable Thomas Jefferson.

41 As Greenblatt so beautifully shows, *On The Nature of Things* played an influential role in the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the formation of the secular “modern” worldview. For Hume’s essay “The Epicurean” and related essays that illuminate Morgan’s intellectual context, see Hume 1777 (1987). For those who want to explore more deeply the influences that shaped Morgan and the specific ways that he drew from the classical traditions, I recommend Trautmann and Kabelac 1994 as a guide to Morgan’s personal library. I also recommend exploration of Morgan’s library, which has untold scholarly riches.

42 Greenblatt 2011, 6.

In May of 1851, the year that *The League of the Iroquois* was published, Morgan married his first cousin, Mary Steele; in the following years they had three children. By all evidence, it was a loving marriage. It is also safe to say that religion was what we in the twenty-first century would call an “issue” between them. According to William Hamilton Morgan, a nephew who lived with the Morgans as a child in the early 1870s, Lewis’ character traits “stand out in contrast to the severe and spotless virtues of his wife.”⁴³ Their reactions to paintings while traveling through Europe suggest a husband celebrating a sensuality that offended the wife’s strict Calvinist tastes. “My wife,” Morgan wrote after a day at the museum, “says the magnificent reclining Venus of Titian is ‘horribly vulgar’. I tell her it is gloriously mortal and human, and realized the grand ideal of a perfect woman better than the Venus de Medici by her side.”⁴⁴ In her travel journals, Mary Morgan quoted the Bible at length and described sermons she attended, churches she visited, in excruciating detail. Mr. Morgan enjoyed backgammon and cards; his wife would not let him play cards at home. Yet in spite of their religious differences, Mr. Morgan regularly attended services at their Presbyterian church in Rochester, where he sat with his wife in their centre-aisle pew, and they refrained from driving on Sunday.⁴⁵

In those first years of marriage, Morgan put aside scholarly activities to devote himself to earning a living. Starting in 1855, during his annual visits to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on behalf of railroad and mining interests, he succumbed to what he called “the temptation of brook-trout fishing.”⁴⁶ Exploring the Carp and Esconauba Rivers, he was surprised by the “numbers and magnitude” of the beaver dams. “The results of the persevering labours of the beaver,” he wrote, “were suggestive of human industry.”⁴⁷ Often accompanied by Ojibwa trappers, he made tracking and observing beavers into his summer recreation. Exploring by foot and boat miles of land where no tree had yet felt the sharpness of an iron blade, Morgan observed first-hand all that he could of the famously reclusive animal. In 1867, he presented a paper entitled “The American Beaver” at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The following year, he published *The American Beaver and Its Works*.⁴⁸

43 W. H. Morgan 1915.

44 Morgan 1937, 313.

45 Moses 2009, 122–23.

46 Morgan 1868 (1986), 8.

47 Morgan 1868 (1986), 8–9.

48 Moses 2009, 157–65.

Underlying Morgan's beaver project was a particular understanding of intelligence and the relationship between human beings and the animal world. To understand his perspective on this issue, one must go back to the choice of Union College President Eliphalet Nott to use in his lectures to Morgan and his classmates the work of Lord Kames—one of the most important spokesmen for the Scottish Common Sense philosophers—as the class text. By choosing Kames, Nott rejected the arguments of David Hume and John Locke that the mind is a blank slate to be formed by experience. For Kames and Nott this was unacceptable. As Kames put it, Hume's theory "seems to annihilate all real distinction of right and wrong in human actions, and to make the preference depend on the fluctuating opinions of men with respect to the general good." Kames worried that Hume's scepticism would undercut the reality of the connection between cause and effect, and thus the arguments for God's existence based on the design of nature. In opposition to Hume, Kames put a renewed emphasis on an underlying structure of the human mind. According to Kames, all human beings possess a moral sense which exists beyond experience. There was, however, at least one point where Nott diverged from the Common Sense consensus: he believed in the existence of the principle of intelligence in non-human animals. In *The American Beaver*, Morgan sided with his former professor and tried to show that the same principle of intelligence existed in both human beings and non-human animals, whom he called mutes. The beaver's peculiar architectural ability provided him with a tangible way to furnish evidence for the animal's "free intelligence." Morgan depicted beavers actively confronting the natural world in their humble way like good empiricists. Differences in intelligence intrinsic to animals and human beings were vast, but they were differences of degree not kind.⁴⁹ At the end of the book, he considered the possibility that the "mutes" possess a "moral sense" and the case for vegetarianism. He expressed concerns: "If the human family maintains its present hostile attitude toward the mutes, the increases in numbers and in civilization at the present ratio, for several centuries to come, it is plain to be seen that many species of animals must be extirpated from earth. An arrest of progress of the human race can alone prevent the dismemberment and destruction of a large portion of the animal kingdom."⁵⁰

It is interesting to note how Morgan slid the idea of a "human family" in here, for even as he was working on this beaver project, before he had any notion of navigating the jungles of Darwinian debate, his hands were full

49 Moses 2009, 161–62. See also Stocking 1995; Pinker 2002.

50 Morgan 1868 (1986), 283.

defending monogenesis, a scientific theory rooted in the understanding of a single human creation and the unity of humankind. Throughout the 1850s, supporters of polygenesis argued for intrinsic immutable differences between the various races; they concentrated on the zoological perspective exemplified by Samuel Morton's *Cranium America*, a brief for the separate creation and intrinsic inequality of the white, black and red "races." Educated Euro-Americans of Morgan's day found the polygenesist case more persuasive because of how difficult they found it to imagine how the varieties of humankind or the diversity of languages could evolve from a common stock within the meagre six thousand years allotted by the biblical time frame. And yet scientific evidence was growing for the expanded duration of human existence on the planet—evidence that weakened the biblical narrative while strengthening the views of Horace and Lucretius that the evolution of language, among other things, was a hard earned human accomplishment achieved over a great span of time. As Morgan came to understand it, languages had evolved in separate directions from a common stock until the kinship between them became obscure: extreme linguistic diversity was compatible with monogenesis. Because the apparent isolation of the American aborigines continued to provide ammunition for the advocates of polygenesis, the debate moved to the New World. If the monogenesists could show that American Indians had, in fact, come from someplace else and were related to peoples of the Old World, this would reintroduce them into a single human narrative. After a set of fortuitous coincidences, this is what Morgan set out to do. His crucial insight was rooted in his earlier observations of how the Iroquois classified relatives. He now saw how kinship terminologies, part of the deep structure of languages, might be able to perform the service that vocabulary could not: if Indians in disparate regions shared a common kinship system, this would point to a common origin. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, as part of his growing research on kinship, Morgan embarked on a series of trips to the Kansas and Nebraska Territories.⁵¹ In *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* he amassed unprecedented quantities of kinship data from around the globe and organized them according to a set of common categories, a single sequence of social evolution, a common human story that resonated with Lucretius' *On The Nature of Things*.⁵²

Unlike Lucretius, Morgan was an anthropologist systematically focused on empirical research; this research was labour of love intertwined with personal

⁵¹ Moses 2009, 168–73.

⁵² Morgan 1871. Moses 2009, 188–89.

tragedy. During a trip west in the spring and summer of 1862 to collect kinship data, Morgan received news that his daughter Mary was sick. On a steamer headed south on July 3rd, 1862, he ended his journal. "It seems fitting that I should add one word concerning the awful intelligence which awaited me in Sioux City," he wrote, "My daughter Mary died on the 15th day of May, the day after the telegram was sent to me. She was 7 years of age. My youngest and only remaining daughter, Helen, sickened, and after a partial recovery, she too died two weeks later. Two of three of my children are taken. Our family is destroyed. The intelligence has absolutely petrified me. I have not shed a tear. It is too profound for tears. Thus ends my last expedition. I go home to my stricken and mourning wife, a miserable and destroyed man."⁵³

Morgan designed a mausoleum in Rochester's Mount Hope Cemetery to contain the corpses of his daughters with the idea that the rest of the family would one day join them there. After labouring with a melancholic concentration over many drafts, he felt satisfied with the plans for what looks like a miniature Greek or Roman temple. He selected a secluded lot on a rugged hillside in a section of the cemetery with the ambience of a wild forest, purchased the stone and hired the construction crew. The Latin phrase "NONHICSUMUS" was engraved, on his orders, into the mausoleum's stone. It means, "We are not here."⁵⁴ This choice of how to honour his daughters refers back to the classical tradition, not to the strict Calvinism of his ancestors.

In the following years, Morgan walked a thin line, remaining an active member of his church community and adhering to the Calvinist discipline of his wife, while exploring the natural world in ways based on Greek and Roman precedent that were being revised and reshaped into modern science. In an 1857 lecture, Morgan expressed the pre-Darwinian views of an ardent monogenesisist. In the years between this lecture and the publication of *The American Beaver*, he was exposed to Darwin's ideas and the controversies surrounding them. The beaver book would have been a logical place to address Darwinian theory. Morgan did not do so, even though he and Mr. Darwin were on friendly terms. During their European tour of 1870–71, the Morgans met with the Darwins; Darwin's sons stayed with the Morgans when they passed through Rochester. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin cited Morgan's work. Yet the amount of space that Morgan devoted in his published work to the theory of evolution by natural selection is paltry: the bulk of Morgan's published writing on it can be found in an 1872 book review in the *Nation*, in which he argued

53 Morgan 1859–62 (1959), 200.

54 Moses 2009, 184.

that Darwin's theory deserved serious attention and should not be discounted on religious grounds.⁵⁵

In unpublished notes from the 1870s labelled "Roman Genesis of Human Development," however, Morgan clarified that on the point most crucial to him, the evolution of society, the Darwinian debate was largely irrelevant. What mattered to him most was that the Epicurean worldview of Lucretius and Horace, once relegated to poetry, had in revamped forms taken centre stage. According to Morgan's distillation of their ideas, Horace believed that original man was "a mere animal without speech," while Lucretius believed that man "first appeared a wild animal amongst wild animals."⁵⁶ Both Romans offered a vision of how human beings left behind this primitive condition. Before Darwin's ideas made their splash, Morgan was committed to this vision: "that all the inventions and discoveries in the ages of civilization together with our ideas of family, of government, and of property root themselves in the experience of mankind in the previous ages of barbarism and the passion for knowledge, together with the ideas of family, of government, and of property root themselves in the experience of mankind in the still earlier ages of savagism: and that human development has been step by step, progressively, in a continuous unbroken chain."⁵⁷ Morgan saw a basic commonality between the evolutionary vision bequeathed to him by the ancient poets and that of a Darwinist—particularly when it came to his primary concern, social evolution. "Those who adopt the Darwinian theory of the descent of man from a quadruped," he explained, "and those who, stopping short of this adopt the theory of evolution equally recognize the fact that man commenced at the bottom of the scale: and worked his way up to civilization through the slow accumulation of knowledge. That early state of man, on either alternative, was one of extreme (rudeness and) savagism the precise conditions of which though not wholly inconceivable, are yet difficult of appreciation."⁵⁸

In a eulogy after Morgan's death, Morgan's close friend and Minister, Joshua McIlvaine, went out of his way to confront "certain misunderstandings and misrepresentations which have arisen" about Morgan's faith because of the dead man's "extreme reticence."⁵⁹ The Minister argued that Morgan's scientific work was consistent with the Bible. "Not a line or a word has he written," said McIlvaine, "which, in its bearings upon the Christian religion, if he were

55 See Swetlitz 1988; Moses 2009, 166.

56 Morgan [1870s?]. This undated manuscript is almost certainly from the 1870s.

57 Morgan [1870s?].

58 Morgan [1870s?].

59 McIlvaine [1881 or 1882?]. The manuscript is undated, but presumably from 1881 or 1882.

here today, I could ask him to blot.”⁶⁰ The Minister also believed that Morgan was anti-Darwinian, without “sympathy” for “this materialism into which the hypothesis may be and is often pushed.”⁶¹ McIlvaine’s mistaken belief that he knew Morgan’s true feelings about Darwinian evolution was combined with his portrait of Morgan as a Christian gentleman, as if possession of the “Christian graces” was incompatible with an acceptance of the mutation of species. McIlvaine recalled Morgan’s “delicate” and “pure mind,” his “gentleness and discretion in social discourse,” his “profound reverence for Christian piety,” his regular church attendance, and his belief in the “vast influence for good of the Christian religion throughout the world.” The Minister contrasted Morgan to “the skeptical scientists with whom he [Morgan] was in constant correspondence, and with whom his most intimate associations lay” and offered a measure of hope:

I had talked and written to him a great deal on the subject, but although he always answered pleasantly, he continued reticent. But when visiting him last spring, and finding his health rapidly declining, sitting where his remains now lie, I said to him, “My friend, you owe me a debt which I must insist you will now pay me.” “Well,” he inquired, “what is it?” I replied, “You owe it to me, as your life-long friend, to tell me more than you have ever yet told me of your relations to God and to the spiritual world.” He instantly recognized the reasonableness of my demand, and said, “But I am not now in a state of health to discuss this matter.” I answered, “I do not want any discussion—I want only information; tell me, without reticence, what is the state of your mind on this great question?” He then said in substance: “I do not claim to have freed my mind from all skeptical doubts, but”—and here I report his precise words—“my heart is with the Christian religion.” This he said giving all the emphasis to the expression that he was capable of bestowing it.⁶²

Such words from the dying man reflect his loyalty to the religious community and *mores* of his birth. Yet it is not hard to imagine Morgan at his deathbed turning in his head ideas and phrases from Horace and Lucretius that were impossible to share with his pious friend. It’s also true that according to

60 McIlvaine [1881 or 1882?].

61 McIlvaine [1881 or 1882?].

62 McIlvaine [1881 or 1882?]. As he was dying, David Hume—in contrast to Morgan—explicitly refused to confess any Christian faith or allegiance. In this rejection of Christianity, which was famous at the time, Hume turned explicitly to Lucretius.

Morgan's Calvinist forebears, such tepid faith—that his “heart is with the Christian religion”—was grounds for eternal damnation.

Progress and “The Mere Property Career”

In 1877—the same year that *Ancient Society* was published and The Lewis Henry Morgan Iron Company in Michigan's Upper Peninsula went bankrupt—what started out as a local protest against further wage cuts on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad turned into the nationwide upheaval that became known as The Great Strikes. That same year, Morgan's friend Joseph Henry, head of the Smithsonian Institute, wrote that anthropology “is at present the most popular branch of science.”⁶³

In *Ancient Society*, Morgan traced the progress of humankind from the cave to the Victorian parlour, from life among a primary group to an increasingly large urban civilization based on state organization. He argued that “gentile” society—which he first observed among the Iroquois—was a universal stage of social evolution. The Greeks, Romans and Hebrews, like all civilized peoples of the Old World, had once lived according to the “barbarian” principles that could still be observed among American Indians. He merged the origins of civil government with the origins of civilization: he located the schism between primitive society and civilization where the kinship system ended. In his language, he distinguished between “*social organization*, founded upon gentes, phratries and tribes,” and what he called “*political organization*, founded upon territory and upon property” (phratries are the combination of related gentes).⁶⁴

Tracing the gradual transformation from *societas* to *civitas*, Morgan used the example of Athens (inspired by George Grote's *History of Greece* and his own readings of the ancient sources) to illustrate the difficulties involved.⁶⁵ According to Morgan's idiosyncratic understanding of Athenian history, a leader from an “unknown time” named Theseus reformed the gentile system and tried to unite the Attic tribes.⁶⁶ In some ways he was successful, but his

63 “There is, at present, no branch of science of more general interest than that of Anthropology, or that which relates to the physical, mental and moral characteristics of man” (Henry 1871). See Moses 2009, 241.

64 Morgan 1877 (1878), 62.

65 See Varto 2014, 514–19, on Morgan's use of the classical history and scholarship to illustrate the transformation from kinship to state.

66 Morgan 1877 (1878), 258–76.

attempt to introduce a class system on top of the gentile system failed. The gentes, phratries, and tribes were able to maintain their power because the social conditions were not yet right to cross the divide from barbarism to civilization. The accumulation of property and the relationships between individuals and property were not yet sophisticated enough. It was left to the lawgiver Solon, centuries later, in 594 BCE, to establish civil society by dividing the people according to how much property they owned. For Morgan, the Athenian case was but one example of how the *civitas*—the state—emerged to protect private property, to regulate an increasingly complex division of labour and exchange of goods. As Morgan wrote in his *European Journals*, “governments, institutions and laws are simply contrivances for the creation and protection of property.”⁶⁷

Seen from this angle, Horace, Lucretius, and Morgan—literate, urban dwellers, citizens of a powerful state who prospered within a vast market where land and labour were exchanged as commodities through the medium of money—lived on the same side of that schism between *societas* and *civitas*. For all of the differences between ancient Rome and nineteenth-century Rochester, New York, the people in them lived in ways that were closer to one another than to “savage” and “barbarian” hunters, gatherers, herders, and farmers. As members of the educated elite of such urban societies based on the market and state, it is not an accident that Horace spoke so easily to Morgan: they confronted similar challenges regarding how to live well.

However, nineteenth-century America was not ancient Rome. The Industrial Revolution had fuelled an unprecedented mastery of the natural world, which created conditions for the unprecedented expansion of an interconnected global market. The scale of industrial output and capitalist expansion, alongside the uneven yet unprecedented growth of modern mass democracy, was something new under the sun. At the same time, if the American experience of the antebellum decades overlapped in places with the republican vision of the good society—in the years after the Civil War, reality and this vision moved further apart. Americans were plugged into an expanding web of interdependence and subject to forces beyond their control. In his lifelong celebration of the American republic, Morgan made clear how much he cared about the fullest possible human flourishing. The republican put active self-government at the centre; the Epicurean put less hope in the public realm, and more in the cultivation of his “garden,” his inner world, his friendships, and the pleasures of a well-lived life. Both republicans and Epicureans, though, along with Stoics

67 Morgan 1937, 269.

and all streams of the Western classical tradition, were in full agreement that human flourishing could not be reduced to the multiplication of material goods or rising and increasingly elaborate levels of consumption. However, the world that Morgan observed during his last years seemed to have a diminished place for the diffusion of property and all it made possible, for self-sufficiency, autonomy, and tranquillity, for control over one's collective destiny, for the refined cultivation of the self.⁶⁸

To put it bluntly, the balance between the different traditions at the core of the American experiment tilted to one side: Christianity and the classical traditions lost force in the face of the aggressively ascendant market.⁶⁹ As the American republic "outgrew" the frontier, it adjusted to new conditions: status as world power; the growth of corporations and of permanent wage-earning classes; the emergence of massive formations of property; centralization of business and government power; growing social inequalities and class conflict; unprecedented material abundance; corruption; and an emerging ethos of consumption.⁷⁰

The rampant corruption of the Grant administration hit close to home when Morgan's old friend, Ely Parker, the first indigenous American to reach the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, was pushed out of office under a cloud of suspicion. Morgan's correspondence with his friend and Minister, McIlvaine, alluded to anxieties shared by the two men about their country. Taking the long view, they agreed that the economic and political turbulence was part of a larger climate of moral decline. As scholars, both men hoped to learn from the ancients. "The parallelism between our moral tendencies and those of the ancient Romans, at the close of the Republic and the commencement of the Empire, which you point out, had struck me with great force, and fixed a number of points of similarity during the summer," wrote McIlvaine in September of 1873. It is an open question whether the two men were dismayed or inspired by Horace, who as a young man fought for the Republic but who later ingratiated himself with the autocratic Augustus Caesar. In any event, the Minister's solution—an infusion of Protestant Christianity—could not suffice

68 Trachtenberg 1992.

69 Also, when the wealthiest ten percent of American families owned almost three-quarters of the nation's material wealth (Tindall and Shi 1996, 857), equality did not, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, exist.

70 On the triumph of the commercial ethos in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Leach 1994. For a related discussion about the reaction to this rising ethos, see Lears 1981.

for his friend, who poured his concerns into scholarly work.⁷¹ *Ancient Society* starts with this epigraph from Horace:

As soon as animals crept forth on the first lands, a speechless and degraded crowd, they battled for the acorn and for their lairs with claws and fists, then with clubs and at length with arms, which afterwards practice had made: until they learned to use words by which to indicate vocal sounds and thoughts and to use names. After that they began to refrain from war, and fortify walled towns, and to lay down laws that no one should be a thief, nor a robber nor an adventurer.⁷²

These words fit well with the themes that Morgan explicates between the covers of his book. The source, however, is surprising: instead of a text from Lucretius or another thinker focused on social evolution, Morgan selected the kind of satire about how to live that he would have enjoyed as a budding lawyer and “warrior” in Aurora, New York. In this satire, Horace’s central concerns have nothing to do with primitive peoples or social evolution. Rather, he pokes fun at how urban dwelling human beings of his day relate to one another. Like so much of Horace’s writing, this is a meditation on friendship:

No one should be dismayed
if he discovers pimples on a friend—
unless he wants his own warts to offend.⁷³

Horace urges the reader to keep a sense of proportion, to be moderate:

A friend commits a minor provocation
Which you must overlook or otherwise
Be thought ungracious. You then demonize
Him and avoid him like that man in debt
Who stays the furthest distance he can get
From Ruso; once the dreaded Kalends come,
Unless that debtor somehow finds a sum
Of cash or loan, he’s collared by the throat

71 According to McIlvaine, “the great work of Protestantism especially,” had “been the revindication of morality as the fundamental element of religion, which had been obscured and well night lost to Romanism” (McIlvaine 1873).

72 Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.99–106. This translation appears as the epigraph of *Ancient Society*.

73 Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.73–74. Translation from Juster 2009.

And has to listen to each anecdote
 That Ruso ever wrote. That friend may pee
 Upon your couch while on a drinking spree
 Or send Evander's cherished saucer flying
 off the table. Is this or, when dying
 of hunger, plucking chicken from your plate
 a reason why a friend is second-rate?
 What is my recourse if the fellow steals,
 Betrays my trust, or welshes on his deals?
 When up against the truth, those who proclaim
 That all transgressions are about the same
 Start hyperventilating. They deny
 Both instinct and tradition, and defy
 Expediency, which appears to be
 the source of fairness and equality.⁷⁴

What follows immediately after this are the lines that appear as the introductory epigraph to *Ancient Society*. In short, the evolutionary excerpt that Morgan provided, with animals "creeping forth," and human beings in a brutish pre-linguistic condition, is part of Horace's argument to members of his Roman audience to be kinder to one another, more generous of heart, more discerning about the morality of various actions. It is a case for mixing mercy and empathy from a man with an Epicurean temper, with a sense of his own mortality that served as a constant reminder of what is important to cherish in our fleeting lives:

One who cherishes the golden mean,
 secure escapes the squalor of the shabby
 hovel, soberly avoids the envy
 mansions elicit.⁷⁵

These lines, along with Horace's larger opus, encapsulate the wisdom and virtues that attracted Morgan as a young man to the Iroquois. That same young Mr. Morgan, of course, threw himself fully into the expansion of American capitalism. As a scholar, Morgan was a part of a circle of modern liberal thinkers who cherished the values and wisdom of the philosophers and poets of Greece

74 Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.83–98. Translation from Juster 2009.

75 Hor. *Odes* 2.10.5–8. Translation from Kaimowitz 2008.

and Rome, even as they created the intellectual framework for a contrary way of life. In a wonderful set of passages about the “poor man’s son,” the Scottish theorist Adam Smith traces the life of an individual who does not follow the advice to avoid envy. Instead, he lets his nagging dissatisfaction drive him. His father’s cottage is too small. Nothing is good enough. This “poor man’s son” is driven to incessant toil because of his pursuit of the eternally receding objects of his imagination. Smith entertains no illusions about such a life: he points out that the “pleasures of wealth and greatness ... strike the imagination as something grand and beautiful and noble, of which the attainment is well worth all of the toil and anxiety which we are so apt to bestow upon it.”⁷⁶ He argues that the imagination in this case leads to a radical deception—but a deception of critical importance for, according to Smith, “it is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind.” On this deception Smith, an advocate of what has become known as the *doux commerce* thesis, builds his case for commercial society—for modern capitalism.⁷⁷

In his masterpiece, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith makes clear how he could advocate a system represented by the “poor man’s son,” who lives falsely, with destructive misconceptions about the nature of the good life. A lover of the classical virtues with an affinity for the Stoics, Smith was conscious of himself as a member of a “small party,” composed of the “real and steady admirers of wisdom and virtue.” Because most people will seek “wealth and greatness” instead of “wisdom and virtue,” the question for him became how wealth and greatness (greed and ambition) are constituted in any given society, how the specific society encourages or discourages specific values, practices and possibilities for both the many and the few. For Smith, as for Morgan, liberal commercial society created avenues for self-development and human flourishing that were not possible in aristocratic societies. Like Smith, Morgan balanced an exquisite complexity—a celebration of capitalism along with a withering critique of the values that make the modern commercial system work.

Morgan was part of a chain of learning that linked ancient Greece and Rome to a self-consciously “modern” world. Morgan’s generation was one of the last to have the Greek and Roman classics at the core of their education as a matter of course. He helped to reshape this classical inheritance into what we might now call the modern secular worldview regarding the natural world and the human place in it. In exploring the astounding range and possibility

76 Smith 1759 (1875), 263.

77 For a compelling analysis of the *doux commerce* thesis, see Hirschmann 1977.

of human experience, he helped to establish the discipline of anthropology. Alongside what might be called his “neo-Epicurean” or “neo-ancient” theory of social evolution, Morgan transferred from the classical tradition to his own day a primitivist nostalgia and ambivalence about progress that invigorated a critique of civilization as old as civilization itself.⁷⁸ Across time and space, self-consciously civilized people turn to “the primitive” to both celebrate what they benefit from and to bemoan with nostalgic pangs what they feel they have lost. The “New World” added characters to a familiar drama. The ascendant market order (modern commercial society) provided a new context. In his argument against commercial society, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, from the Calvinist centre of Geneva, approvingly compared the “tranquillity” and “liberty” of the “savage man” to that of the Stoic; he looked back to a simpler time when human beings were more independent and less reliant on others.⁷⁹ Morgan would have understood Rousseau better than most. As one of the advocates for the “market revolution,” however, he made a wager like Smith’s (and Smith’s close friend Hume). In his youth, Morgan felt confident that the young republic, which embodied the liberal commercial promise, created the greatest possibility for the diffusion of human flourishing. In his declining years, Morgan observed the relentless, single-minded pursuit of property along with massive centralization. Toward the end of *Ancient Society*, he did what gamblers often do: he looked to the future. In doing so, he synthesized his lifelong love of his favourite classical poets, the panoramic social evolutionary vision of Lucretius, his deep appreciation of the Iroquois and other “primitive peoples” who embodied the simple life reflected in Horace’s poems, and his celebration of the American experiment (which he worried was going off track). According to him, the laws of social evolution promised revolution, in the older sense of the word: *re* means back and *volvere* means to roll. As Morgan writes in one of his most famous passages:

A mere property career is not the final destination of mankind, if progress is to be the law of the future, as it has been of the past. The time

78 For an interesting set of articles on this topic, see Diamond 1974.

79 E.g., “There is, I feel, an age at which the individual man would wish to stop: you are about to inquire about the age at which you would have liked your whole species to stand still. Discontented with your present state, for reasons which threaten your unfortunate descendants with still greater discontent, you will perhaps wish it were in your power to go back; and this feeling should be a panegyric on your first ancestors, a criticism of your contemporaries, and a terror to the unfortunates who will come after you” (Rousseau 1755 (2005), 10).

which has passed away since civilization began is but a fragment of the ages yet to come. The dissolution of society bids fair to become the termination of a career in which property is the end and the aim: because such a career contains the elements of self-destruction. Democracy in government, brotherhood in society, equality in rights and privileges, and universal education foreshadow the next higher plane of society to which experience, intelligence, and knowledge are steadily tending. It will be a revival, in higher form of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes.⁸⁰

With this magnificent synthesis of values and hopes projected into the future, Morgan was launched on his strange posthumous career. From the year of Morgan's death until his own death two years later, Karl Marx took careful notes on Morgan's work; with these notes as the foundation, Engels published *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State* (1884), turning Morgan into an unlikely hero of the Left. It is interesting to note that Marx wrote his PhD dissertation in 1841, on *The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*. The modern world has been shaped by social theorists, anthropologists included, who are in constant dialogue with the poets and philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome. But if we lived like good Epicureans, Stoics, or Cynics, or as Socrates, Aristotle or Plato, or for that matter, like Jesus, the modern economic order would disintegrate. The hopes of Morgan have been eclipsed in a global civilization of intense inequalities driven by the ceaseless manufacture of insatiable cravings for unnecessary things. This is what Max Weber, who also knew his way around those ancient *fora* and gardens, meant when he wrote that we moderns inhabit "an iron cage."⁸¹

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80 Morgan 1877, 552.

81 Weber 1905 (2002). Although "iron cage" is not the most accurate translation, it is the most common in the English speaking world and fits well with the metaphor at the centre of this chapter. Weber emphasizes the particularly Calvinist contribution to the development of capitalism in contrast to other Protestant traditions.

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The Tinted Lens of *Ancient Society*: Classical History and American Experience in the Ethnology of Lewis Henry Morgan

Emily Varto

The history of the human race is one in source, one in experience, one in progress.¹

Lewis Henry Morgan's ethnological masterwork, *Ancient Society*, related human cultures to one another over time and space in a grand comparative, evolutionary scheme. It was a synthesis of ethnographic information drawn from numerous peoples, chief among them the Greeks, Romans, and Iroquois. "Institutions, inventions, and discoveries," Morgan writes, "when collated and compared tend to show the unity of origin of mankind, the similarity of human wants in the same stage of advancement, and the uniformity of the operations of the human mind in similar conditions of society."² Every culture was comparable. His ethnology revealed parallel achievements and furthered the idea of a common path of progress, presenting differences as the consequence of developmental stages, not as differences of kind. Contemporary differences, for example, between the aboriginal peoples of North America and European colonists, were a matter of time and advancement. They were not a matter of differing natural characteristics or varying abilities of race. Given enough time, each people would experience parallel achievements and move inexorably toward civilization. Some were just further along the path than others, at a given point in time.

What this path to civilization looked like was defined primarily by European history and experience.³ A long and complex engagement with classical

¹ Morgan 1877 (1878), preface. The author thanks Shari Clarke for her careful reading of this chapter and her helpful comments.

² Morgan 1877 (1878), preface.

³ See Stocking 1991, 186–37, for how the ideas of savagery and civilization were shaped by Victorian culture and its ideologies. See Kuper 2005, 19–35, on the Greco-Roman roots of the language of civilization, barbarism, and savagery. See also Table 5.1 (in Kennedy, this volume), for Morgan's ethnical periods as fleshed out by Otis Mason in the late nineteenth century. The privileging of European manners, *mores*, beliefs, skills, and knowledge as civilized is stark and obvious.

antiquity had so shaped this history and experience that ethnologists measured human progress with typologies and hermeneutic patterns derived from the study of antiquity. Ethnological schemes of human progress were far from natural; they were paradigms whose contours were defined by contemporary European civilization and classical history. The classics, especially, formed a useful lens through which to view the self and others. Greek and Roman history, as told in the great narrative histories of early nineteenth-century classical scholarship, offered Morgan a Eurocentric hermeneutic. The classical lens, however, was not inflexible. When exported to the “New World” through settler colonialism, it gathered new tints.⁴ Morgan was aware of, and even prickly about, his differing viewpoint as an American. He felt he could see some things plainly, which others could not, given their lack of experience with North American aboriginal peoples. Morgan’s scheme of human progress was informed by viewing his ethnographic studies of aboriginal peoples through a classical lens. That same lens, however, was also tinted by Morgan’s experience with the Iroquois.

Classical Lens, American Experience

Morgan trained as a lawyer and was not a professional academic, despite his profound impact on the academy and the future social sciences.⁵ He had a membership in the National Academy of Sciences and was later president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.⁶ Morgan’s ethnology was the product of his education, personal study in libraries, correspondence with notable scholars and thinkers, and ethnographic inquiry, beginning with the Iroquois near his home in upstate New York.⁷ Although his work may not live up to the standards and practices of modern ethnography, Morgan was no armchair ethnographer. He was well travelled throughout North America, and his knowledge of the Iroquois came through asking local Iroquois informants.

4 See also De Angelis, this volume.

5 On his influence, see the varying interpretations in Fortes 1969; Kuper 2005, 79–81; Trautmann 2001; 2008; Moses 2009, 270–86.

6 On his later career, see Moses 2009, 203–67.

7 The development of Morgan’s ethnographic methods and process has been traced in letters, journals, and notes in the Morgan archives. See Tooker 1983; White 1957. For a broader picture of the development of his ethnography and ethnology, see Trautmann 2008; Moses 2009.

Experience with North American aboriginal populations was instrumental to Morgan's ethnology. We can observe the importance he placed on such experience, in his correspondence with Sir Henry Sumner Maine. Maine was a British professor of jurisprudence and ethnologist, with advanced degrees in the classics. He shared Morgan's interest in comparative social evolution and had authored the seminal study in the evolution of law, *Ancient Law*, in 1861. They exchanged several letters in the 1870s, and they met once in London, along with the Scottish ethnologist John Ferguson McLennan.⁸ Maine praised Morgan's *Systems of Consanguinity* and *Ancient Society*, but he also followed up his reading with many questions. It seems he was curious, and a bit dubious, about matriarchal institutions. He also had some points of criticism, especially about Morgan's rendering of the ancient *gens*.

Morgan, despite overlapping interests, appears to have been much less intrigued by Maine's work. He cites him little in *Ancient Society*. He even seems to have become annoyed at Maine for questioning his understanding of the *gens*.⁹ Morgan was especially prickly about what he felt was European ignorance about the aboriginal peoples of North America. In their correspondence, both between themselves and with others, Morgan appears frustrated by Maine's inability to understand the aboriginal peoples of North America, which he attributed to lack of contact. Morgan expressed this vein of frustration openly to his American colleagues. In a letter to an American anthropologist, he writes, "The Europeans have had no experience which will enable them to know the life of the native people. I do not understand the failure to reason the *gentes*. Perhaps a visit among the Indians or native peoples of America would clear the thoughts."¹⁰ If only they could see what he could see, then they would understand the *gens*.

In a conciliatory letter to Morgan, Maine summed up their differences neatly as matters of approach and sources of evidence:

As you truly say, we have attacked the same subject from opposite sides. I understand you to have begun with observations of the customs of

8 Maine's letters to Morgan are preserved in the Morgan archives in Rochester. Unfortunately, most of Maine's papers have been lost and, along with them, most of the letters from Morgan to Maine. For an overview of the correspondence and relationship, see Strickland 1974.

9 According to a letter Maine wrote to E. B. Tylor, when questioned on ancient Greek and Roman institutions, Morgan complained to him of the "tendency of [his] mind to definiteness" (quoted in Strickland 1974, 128–29).

10 Letter from Morgan to James Albert Robinson, quoted in Strickland 1974, 129.

savages, whereas I began as a Professor of Jurisprudence and should very probably have never interested myself in primitive usage, if I had not been profoundly discontented with the modes of explaining legal rules which were in fashion when I began to write. I am still apt to limit my enquiries to ancient institutions which I can more or less distinctly connect with modern ideas and ways of thought.¹¹

Morgan had embarked on his project by observing aboriginal peoples, whereas Maine had begun, and would stick with, the ancients. Others have since made this same distinction: Maine was a classically trained jurist and Morgan, an ethnologist.¹² The picture, I argue, is somewhat more nuanced. It is true that Maine was not concerned with universal progressions and did not engage with pre-literate societies. It is also true that Morgan's ethnological inquiries began with the Iroquois, and he did not limit himself to ancient *exempla*.¹³ Morgan, however, pursued his interests in ways informed and inspired by the ancient classical civilizations. His ethnological thinking, like Maine's, was imbued with the ancients.¹⁴ Both employed a classical lens; what was different was its tint and what they viewed through it.

The classical lens of Morgan was strong. In *Ancient Society*, Morgan drew heavily upon both ancient texts and contemporary classical scholarship. He engaged, particularly, with George Grote's *History of Greece* and Barthold Georg Niebuhr's *Römische Geschichte* (in its English translation), both large and well respected narrative histories of classical antiquity. Classical history helped him determine the course of all human progress, by filling out crucial parts of the paradigm with data.¹⁵ The ancient Greeks and Romans were comparable like all peoples he studied. And they were among the peoples whose institutions, inventions, and discoveries Morgan collated and compared. Morgan, however, was not a slave to the classical tradition. He was knowledgeable about it, even inspired by it, but he was not attached to any particular dogma of classical scholarship. He even seemed to revel in charting his own course against the venerable classical

11 Letter from Maine to Morgan, as quoted in Strickland 1974, 122–23.

12 Fortes 1969, 11–12; Strickland 1974, 120–21.

13 Tooker 1983; White 1957.

14 The broader influence of the classics throughout Morgan's life and work is expertly covered by Daniel Noah Moses in his chapter in this volume. In this chapter, I turn to the role(s) of the classics more specifically in *Ancient Society*, arguably the culmination and synthesis of Morgan's ethnological thinking.

15 Varto 2014.

historians George Grote and Barthold Georg Niebuhr, especially where he attributed his ability to see historical truth, “as it seems to an American” to his national experience and context.¹⁶ The phrase recalls his frustrations with Maine. The classics would inform the way Morgan interpreted his ethnographic inquiries, even as his American experience would come to shape his understanding of the classics.

Ethnographic History and Ethnological Time

The existence of mankind extends backward immeasurably, and loses itself in a vast and profound antiquity.¹⁷

Ancient Greece and Rome provided nineteenth-century ethnologists like Morgan with easily accessible and familiar data.¹⁸ But they did more than that: the classics provided ethnographic details *and* historical patterns that together formed a lens. Morgan used this lens to recognize the value of his ethnographic inquiries and to interpret and situate his information. The historical patterns and ethnographic details in the grand narrative histories of Grote and Niebuhr helped mould Morgan’s classical lens in the context of a late nineteenth-century “revolution in time.”

A New Project for Ethnology and a New Role for Antiquity

The so-called biblical short chronology placed the beginning of the world at about 4000 years before Christ. Although dominant in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this chronology was not found in the Bible itself. It was the product of thousands of years of historiography and was only one of several biblically-based chronologies. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, it had already begun to face serious challenges.¹⁹ These came from other ancient chronological traditions, like the Chinese, knowledge of which Jesuit missionaries brought back to Europe. They also came from “new” and “old”

16 Morgan’s truth “as it seems to an American” was that early Greece was democratic and not monarchic, as Grote and other historians had it (Morgan 1877 (1878), 247). See Varto 2014, 518, and also below.

17 Morgan 1877 (1878), preface.

18 Ackerman 2008, 143–46.

19 On the revolution in time, see Gruber 1965 (2008); Toulmin and Goodfield 1965, 140–70, 238–46; Stiebing 1993, 33–46; Trigger 2006, 137–58. For its impact on ethnology, especially Morgan’s, see Trautmann 1992; 2008, 205–30.

world archaeologies. Egyptian and, increasingly, North American archaeology suggested a much deeper antiquity. The discoveries that finally spelled the end of the short chronology of the world for many intellectuals came from geology and palaeontology. In a series of adjustments, the fossil record and skeletal evidence revealed that the world was vastly older than 6000 years. Not only had plants and animals been around for a great deal longer, but humans had too. In the span of about a generation, intellectuals across disciplines faced the challenges presented by a very convincing new chronology of the earth in vast, almost unimaginable, geological ages, into which human life stretched far back. Along with this new geological, biological, and human chronology, came the imperative to expand human history. No longer could human origins be pinpointed within the last 6000 years; a new origin story was needed.

This “revolution in time” not only led to a longer span of human history to account for but changed ideas about the origins and variety of humanity. How did mankind come to be as it is, with its similarities and differences, and its variety of races and civilizations? The study of antiquity had once collaborated in answering such questions through philology, tracing human history linguistically.²⁰ Comparative philologists believed that, through careful study, the ancient languages, and the people who spoke them, could be traced back to one common proto-language and the first humans. Such an endeavour was possible in a world only 6000 years-old. Accepting the new chronology of human history, however, made that project futile. All the peoples of the earth could no longer be placed into one great family tree, whose shared root was knowable through the study of ancient peoples and their texts.

Ethnologists shifted from documenting a common origin story for mankind, to looking for a common developmental trajectory. They created schemes of social evolution and documented the stages that human societies passed through along the way. John Ferguson McLennan and Johann Jakob Bachofen provided important foundations for later evolutionary schemes. They surmised independently that a primitive period of matriarchy occurred before a later civilized patriarchy.²¹ Maine observed a move from societies based on kinship bonds to those based on state bonds and the holding of territory.²² Concerned with legal evolution, he recognized this as a change from status to contract. Although this change anticipates later universal ethnological schemes, Maine did not apply this pattern to all peoples. Numa Denis

20 Trautmann 2008, 213–22; Turner 2014, 334–37.

21 Bachofen 1861; McLennan 1865.

22 Maine 1861.

Fustel de Coulanges's scheme was similar to Maine's. Society progressed, or degraded, from the power of aristocratic kinship groups to the power of the wider collective of the state.²³ Morgan's ethnology belongs to this ethnological trend. *Ancient Society* presents a scheme of human progress from savagery, through barbarism, to civilization. Developments in technology punctuated the long length of human history into "ethnical stages," which began and ended with advancements in weaponry, agriculture, and intellectual pursuits. And those advancements corresponded with particular social and governmental structures.²⁴

As part of its new project, ethnology changed its relationship with the classics. Since tracing the common root of all humans through language was now seen to be a fruitless task, comparative philology lost much of its appeal to those interested in early man. Classical antiquity itself, however, was given a new role.²⁵ The drive to fill large swathes of human history could be satisfied with ethnographic details, including those of the Greeks and Romans. Thus, Morgan turned to the classics, partly to find the institutions to collate and compare, and, ultimately, to fill the vast and profound antiquity of the human race.

The Classics in Morgan's Ancient Society

Morgan, like many educated men of his time and circumstance, had a deep knowledge of antiquity. It was fostered by an education steeped in the classics and formed through a lifelong engagement with classical poetry, philosophy, and history.²⁶ Throughout his life, he held onto a love of Latin poetry and admiration for Epicureanism as espoused by Roman poets.²⁷ Morgan even tried writing a little Latin poetry himself.²⁸ More adept in Latin, he appears to have had a limited facility with ancient Greek. Rome dominated Morgan's earlier and, it seems, his later imagination.

Morgan and his wife built a large private library with a respectable and representative collection of classical texts, many of them purchased in bulk

23 Fustel De Coulanges 1864.

24 For the outline of the ethnical stages, see Morgan 1877 (1878), 3–18. See also Kuper 2005, 75–79.

25 Cf. Trautmann 2008, 229–30.

26 On Morgan's education and his intellectual influences, see Moses 2009, 9–36.

27 See Moses in this volume.

28 The poetry is among Morgan's papers in the archive at the University of Rochester and is unpublished.

to round out the holdings.²⁹ The library included standard reference materials (lexicons and grammars) for reading ancient Greek and Latin. Latin editions of Cicero and Lucretius were among his earliest acquisitions. He later added a variety of historical, oratorical, literary, and philosophical texts in Latin. Although Morgan could read Latin, his library contained more works in English translation than in the original. He tended to buy Greek authors in English translation first, before acquiring select volumes in ancient Greek.³⁰ The library also included standard works of classical scholarship. Morgan owned several ethnographic style manuals and dictionaries of the ancient world. He also possessed the narrative histories of Thirlwall, Grote, Niebuhr, and Mommsen, among others. Thirlwall's *History of Greece* is one of the earliest noted acquisitions (in an inventory dated to 1851).³¹ Grote and Niebuhr's histories were acquired for the library somewhat late despite their prominence in *Ancient Society* and in the nineteenth century in general. Morgan recorded them in an inventory taken in 1869, listing them among a great number of classical texts and works of scholarship, many of which he cites in *Ancient Society*.³² These later acquisitions in the classics seem, according to Trautmann and Kabelac's analysis, to have been guided by his ethnological interests while writing *Ancient Society*.³³

The classics were a vast storeroom from which Morgan pulled terms, quotations, and observations, deftly embedding them in his ethnology. Morgan draws upon a wide variety of ancient texts in *Ancient Society*, from works of early Greek poetry to later Latin prose. In all, he references 33 ancient authors in around 160 citations. Homer, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Livy are the most frequently referenced with over twenty references each.³⁴ Cicero and Plutarch follow with over ten each, then Aeschylus, Demosthenes, Gaius the Jurist, and Herodotus with five to ten each. Morgan cites several ancient authors less than five times. As to be expected, references to classical texts are concentrated in the chapters in *Ancient Society* on the Greeks and the Romans.³⁵

29 Morgan's library is now mostly housed at the University of Rochester and has been helpfully catalogued and analysed by Trautmann and Kabelac (1994). For analysis of the classical holdings, see Trautmann and Kabelac 1994, 41–42.

30 Trautmann and Kabelac 1994, 41–42.

31 Trautmann and Kabelac 1994, 62.

32 Trautmann and Kabelac 1994, 91–95.

33 Trautmann and Kabelac 1994, 42.

34 Some of the Homeric citations contain multiple references, for example, at Morgan 1877 (1878), 31–34.

35 92 of the approximately 160 references to classical authors are found in Section II: "Growth of the Idea of Government" in the following chapters: "The Grecian *Gens*," "The Grecian *Phratry*, Tribe, and Nation," "The Institution of Grecian Political Society," "The Roman *Gens*," "The Roman Curia, Tribe, and Populus," and "The Institution of Roman Political Society."

Morgan tends to cite Greek authors in Greek chapters and Roman in Roman chapters. Morgan is, however, ahistorical in his references, frequently inferring the existence and nature of earlier institutions and practices from information in later authors. His references are also wide-ranging in genre. Sometimes, he turns to Homer or tragedians like Aeschylus to exemplify an idea or concept; elsewhere, he looks to more stolid writers, like Gaius the Jurist, for detailed descriptions of institutions. He has more luck with the Romans on this front than with the Greeks. Outside of the chapters on the Greeks and Romans, little pattern is discernible where he cites which ancient author, Greek or Roman, early or late.

The one discernible pattern is Morgan's foregrounding of Lucretius and Horace in the opening chapters of *Ancient Society*. These poets have pride of place, if not of abundance.³⁶ Horace's Lucretian exposition on the evolution of human civilization from *Satire* 1.3 opens the volume as an epigraph.³⁷ Morgan provides no commentary or translation, but the quotation's signal towards the evolutionary thinking to follow is clear. It appears alongside two more contemporary quotations (from a comparative linguist and an anthropologist) that similarly proclaim the upward evolution of human society. In the introductory chapters, Morgan expounds on the unity and progress of mankind, and he sets forth the grand scheme of his ethnological project. Here, he embeds direct quotations of Lucretius that point to the evolutionism he found in *De Rerum Natura*.³⁸ Most often he simply quotes Lucretius with no translation or commentary. By comparison, he also cites Homeric phrases and terms frequently in these chapters, but always with commentary and to illustrate material objects like axes, looms, and harps.³⁹ Lucretius and Horace, it seems, spoke for themselves. Their poetry did not serve as evidence or analogy but as a frame or guide. Their Epicurean evolutionism framed the grand ethnological scheme of human progress. Morgan found not only evidence in the storeroom of the classics, but also the contours of his ethnological thinking.

36 On the significance of Epicureanism, Lucretius, and Horace in Morgan's life and work, see Moses, this volume.

37 Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.99–106. Horace also appears on the title page: *nescit vox missa reverti*. It is a line from the *Ars Poetica*: "A word once sent forth cannot return" (Hor. *Ars P.* 390).

38 Morgan 1877 (1878), 5, 20, 26, 36. The introductory and programmatic first section of *Ancient Society*, "Growth of Intelligence Through Inventions and Discoveries," contains the chapters: "Ethnical Periods," "Arts of Subsistence," and "Ratio of Human Progress."

39 Morgan 1877 (1878), 25, 31–34, 44–45.

He would find similar contours in the works of prominent classical scholars of the earlier nineteenth century. In *Ancient Society*, Morgan references fifteen classical scholars. Ten of those he references less than three times. The scholarship includes both large narrative histories and ethnographic-style dictionaries and manuals.⁴⁰ Morgan engages the most with two large narrative histories: George Grote's *History of Greece* and Barthold Georg Niebuhr's *History of Rome* (*Römische Geschichte*) in English translation.⁴¹ He engaged to a lesser extent with Mommsen's more closely contemporary *History of Rome* (*Römische Geschichte*), again in translation.⁴² After these, Morgan most often references Karl Friedrich Hermann's *A Manual of the Political Antiquities of Greece* and William Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. He cites entries, for example, on Roman social, political, and religious topics: *rex*, *pontifex*, *tribune*, *gens*, *patricii*, and *plebs*. These works are typical of much of the other classical scholarship that Morgan cites, namely, manuals and dictionaries about daily life, economy, religious practices, and religious, social, and political institutions and offices.

Morgan, therefore, turned particularly to Grote and Niebuhr for his classical history. But why did he do so, when there were more recent narrative histories (many of them in his library), and when he had access to many works of a more ethnographic nature like the dictionaries and manuals (many also in his library)? Certainly, both Grote and Niebuhr were widely published, translated, and read, and both were well respected. By the last half of the nineteenth century, in Morgan's time, their works were still popular and venerable, if a little old. Mommsen's newer Roman history (1854–56, Morgan's English edition was from 1870–71) had challenged and begun to eclipse Niebuhr's. So why did he look to Grote, Niebuhr, and, to a lesser degree, Mommsen? The answer depends on

40 The full list of classical scholars cited in *Ancient Society*, in order of citation frequency: 20–30 references: George Grote, *History of Greece*; Barthold Georg Niebuhr, *History of Rome*. 10–20 references: Theodor Mommsen, *History of Rome*. 5–10 references: Karl Friedrich Hermann, *A Manual of the Political Antiquities of Greece, Historically Considered*; William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. 1–5 references: Wilhelm Adolf Becker, *Charicles: Illustrations of the Private Life of the Ancient Greeks*; Karl Otfried Müller, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*; Ernst Curtius, *History of Greece*; Ernst Wilhelm G. Wachsmuth, *The Historical Antiquities of the Greeks with Reference to their Political Institutions*; Connop Thirlwall, *History of Greece*; Alexander Adam, *Roman Antiquities*; August Boeckh, *The Public Economy of Athens*; William Ewart Gladstone, *Juventus Mundi: The Gods and Men of the Heroic Age*; John Anthony Cramer, *A Geographical and Historical Description of Ancient Italy*.

41 Grote 1846–56; Niebuhr 1811–12 (1851).

42 Mommsen 1854–56 (1862–63).

what Morgan was looking for and what inspired him. The availability or familiarity of the classics alone did not lead to their influence in nineteenth-century ethnology. What mattered was *how* the classical historians presented ancient history. Like the evolutionism of Lucretius and Horace, Grote and Niebuhr's histories followed contours that suited ethnological projects inspired by the "revolution in time."

The Progressive and Ethnographic Appeal of Grote and Niebuhr

The histories of Grote and Niebuhr appealed to Morgan because their blend of ethnographic detail embedded within progressive history had an affinity with the new ethnological projects of the late nineteenth century. Their histories included descriptions of beliefs, customs, and institutions set into a historical framework. These vast tomes offered such ethnographic data over a long span of time and over periods experiencing profound social, intellectual, and political change. Thus, they presented an opportunity to study peoples undergoing the very changes which interested Morgan. Morgan cared about customs and institutions (not individuals and battles), which he could use to identify the stages of human progress. Like nineteenth-century ethnologists, Niebuhr and Grote compared the customs and institutions of the Greeks and Romans with those of other peoples, like the Scots and the Germans.⁴³ By the time ethnologists turned to the classics to craft evolutionary schemes, classicists were already relying on cross-cultural analogies to construct ancient history.

Niebuhr and Grote wrote arguably two of the most influential classical histories of the early nineteenth century. They were founders of the modern historian's art of source criticism, and both were extreme positivists and empiricists. They believed that historical truth could be found in the sources, but only by applying the right standards of evidence and source criticism. Their positivist empiricism delimited the evidence; it led to a high degree of precision through detailed sorting and analysing of sources. Accordingly, Grote and Niebuhr distrusted the ancient mythological sources on the early periods of Greece and Rome, although they rejected myth and legend to varying degrees. Grote insisted on confirming a source's veracity, something which one could not do with mythical accounts. Niebuhr was more willing to chance reconstruction of later parts of the early history of Rome from the correct treatment of mythical accounts.

43 See Stocking 1991, 20–25, on Niebuhr's and German philology's focus on institutions and comparative analogies and the influence of their methods on Victorian anthropology.

When Niebuhr and Grote rejected ancient mythological sources as historical evidence, they came upon a problem similar to that experienced later by ethnologists confronting the “revolution in time.” When they wrote the history of early Greece and Rome without myth, they faced long empty stretches of time. A narrative history of individuals and events was impossible without filling in the details with myths and legends. So, instead of names and events, Grote and Niebuhr set cultural, social, and religious details into broad frameworks. They wrote ethnographic history, over vast periods of time and set into periods of development.

In his introduction to *History of Rome*, Niebuhr describes the problem of the credibility of the sources for early Rome. He also points to the imperative to attempt a history nonetheless:

But in the early part of [the story of Rome] poetry has drawn her party coloured veil over historical truth: afterward, vain fictions, still more frequently than popular legends under various forms, are mixed up, within the outlines of dry chronicles, with the scanty results drawn by one or two genuine historians from authentic documents: often they are irreconcilable and easily discerned; but sometimes there is a deceitful congruity: in no history does actual certainty begin comparatively later. Still however it is not on that account necessary to give up this most important of all histories for the largest part of its duration as hopeless. Provided only that no pretension be set up to that complete accuracy in minute details, which in truth is of no value to us, much may be ascertained in those periods, dark as they are, on no weaker historical evidence than we possess for contemporary events in Greece: and this we are bound to attempt.⁴⁴

Niebuhr’s empiricist approach to early Rome was, like the revolution in time, a watershed moment in its field. By the middle of the nineteenth century, anyone writing on early Rome or Greece had to grapple with Niebuhr’s approach to the early sources. As one of his later critics, Sir George Cornewall Lewis noted, “Almost all the subsequent works on the subject are either founded upon his researches or are occupied to a great extent with criticisms of his conclusions, and with reasons for rejecting or doubting them.”⁴⁵ While some scholars rejected Niebuhr’s empiricism altogether, others, like Cornewall, took up the problem of credibility and went even further than Niebuhr had. At

44 Niebuhr 1811–12 (1851), 11–2.

45 Cornewall Lewis 1855, 12.

issue for Cornewall was Niebuhr's attempt to reconstruct early Roman history at all. He criticized Niebuhr's process of "rejecting and restoring"⁴⁶ the mythological accounts (what he calls "the internal evidence") and attempting "to solve a problem, for the solution of which no sufficient data exist."⁴⁷ While he did reject myth as history in general, Niebuhr seems to have felt that he could sometimes lift that "party coloured veil."

Niebuhr subdivides early Roman history into three periods based on the evidence available for each. With each succeeding period, the level of reliable historical evidence increases and, therefore, the possibility of reconstructing narrative history. The earliest period, from the founding of Rome up to the reign of Tullus Hostilius, could not be reconstructed because of a dearth of reliable evidence. A period of mythico-history followed, a blend of fiction and truth, from which some history could be made. This period ends with the first secession of plebs. A true and secure narrative history could be recovered only after that time, through careful reconstruction.

Using this scheme, Niebuhr begins his *History of Rome* with a lengthy section on the ethnography of the peoples of ancient Italy. He does not include historical events or even descriptions of customs and institutions. Instead, he outlines the various peoples of ancient Italy, where they came from, where they lived, and how they were and were not related.⁴⁸ When he arrives at the Romans, Niebuhr admits the limits of the evidence: "I do not inquire who built Rome, and gave laws to her; but what Rome was before her history begins, and how she grew out of her cradle: on these points something may be learnt from traditions and from her institutions."⁴⁹ Instead of a narrative, he writes an ethnographic history of traditions and institutions. To explicate the institutions, he relied on analogy.⁵⁰ Niebuhr contrasts Roman colonies, for example, with British plantations and draws an analogy with Spanish settlements in the

46 Cornewall Lewis 1855, 11.

47 Cornewall Lewis 1855, 11, 13. Cornewall writes the following about Niebuhr and his followers: "Instead of employing those tests of credibility which are consistently applied to modern history, they attempt to guide their judgment by the indications of internal evidence, and assume that the truth can be discovered by an occult faculty of historical divination ... The consequence is, that ingenuity and labour can produce nothing but hypotheses and conjectures, which may be supported by analogies, and may sometimes appear specious and attractive, but can never rest on the solid foundation of proof."

48 This section is akin to his "Lectures on Ancient Ethnography and Geography" (Niebuhr 1853), in which he treats the peoples and the geography of ancient Greece and Italy.

49 Niebuhr 1811–12 (1851), 1:245.

50 Cornewall Lewis 1855, 11, 13.

New World.⁵¹ That particular analogy belongs to a larger exploration of the role of ethnic divisions in the origins of Roman tribes. Perhaps they were the result of combining two or more peoples, like the Romans and the Sabines. To explore this, Niebuhr draws on two Greek examples and an Italian one (from Mantua) to examine how ancient communities divided their members into tribes.

Although his early history of Rome progresses through stages of development, Niebuhr himself was not a proponent of progressivism.⁵² He was not a Whig historian, as Grote was, who believed that human history progressed towards enlightenment and freedom. Nor was he a developmentalist thinker, believing, as Morgan did, in the stages and promise of progress. The progress evident in his history of early Rome was, instead, a product of his source criticism. Rejecting myth left Niebuhr with no narrative history, only broad sketches of time to be filled out with ethnographic detail. Like ethnologists later in the nineteenth century, Niebuhr focused on institutions, drawing analogies and traditional accounts to tell the story of how Rome “grew out of her cradle” in discrete stages.

It is curious that Morgan, the trained lawyer, turned more to Niebuhr than to Mommsen. Mommsen, in an approach akin to Morgan's ethnology, reconstructed Roman history through its institutions and legal terminologies.⁵³ Mommsen took this hard-lined approach to source criticism in opposition to Niebuhr's, which often tended toward imaginative reconstruction. Mommsen's hard-nosed *Realienforschung* may, however, have been too rigid for Morgan's speculative approach. He may have felt a frustration with Mommsen's realism, similar to that he had with Maine's definiteness. In *Ancient Society*, Morgan tends to turn to Mommsen for very specific philological details. He also agrees with him on the blood-relatedness of the *gens*.⁵⁴ He does not follow him on the broader strokes of Roman history, which in Mommsen have an aristocratic bent. Mommsen's history portrays the downfall and subsequent restoration of a powerful and effective aristocracy.⁵⁵ Niebuhr's history, in comparison, was a lesson on inevitable and universal aristocratic decline, for good or ill.⁵⁶ Mommsen's trajectory may have been less compelling for Morgan, who was

51 Niebuhr 1811–12 (1851), 1:254–55.

52 Momigliano 1982 (1994), 229–36; Stocking 1991, 20–21; Nippel 2014.

53 Rebenich 2014.

54 E.g., Morgan 1877 (1878), 271 and 294.

55 Rebenich 2014.

56 Smith 2006, 84; Varto 2014, 504.

convinced of classical history's arc from democracy to aristocracy, and back to democracy.

George Grote's historical method was heavily influenced by Niebuhr's. Grote cites Niebuhr on his approach to the evidence for early classical history: the poor quality of the evidence (namely, poetry and myth) limited the history that could be written.⁵⁷ He writes, "To conceive absolute beginning or origin (as Niebuhr has justly remarked) is beyond the reach of our faculties: we can neither apprehend nor verify anything beyond progress, or development, or decay—change from one set of circumstances to another, operated by some definite combination of physical or moral laws."⁵⁸ Early classical history could only be told, Niebuhr argued and Grote agreed, as stories of change, not of individuals and particular events. Grote, also like Niebuhr, employed cross-cultural analogies to flesh out these early periods.⁵⁹ Grote, however, was less willing to reconstruct history as imaginatively as his predecessor did. He wrote an ethnographic and progressive history more concerned with customs and cultural ideas. His history begins with "legendary Greece," before moving to a historical period starting with the celebration of the first Olympic games in 776 BCE. But even Grote's history from 776 BCE on has the spirit of ethnography, describing myths, customs, and institutions.⁶⁰ Turning to poetry to write social and cultural history, he argues that the poems are "full of instruction as pictures of life and manners" and, although not historical, are "valuable as unconscious expositors of their own contemporary society."⁶¹ Grote also describes the characteristics of early Greek political society. He addresses political feelings and anxieties, customs and habits (like public speaking and gathering in the agora), and specific institutions (like the *gens* and *phratry*). He does the same with moral and social behaviour and attitudes, family relations, emotions and relationships, and even criminal behaviour. Grote acts as a cultural historian: he documents the customs and beliefs of the early Greeks through their stories and presents this data in an ethnographic style.

57 Chambers 1996, 21.

58 Grote 1846–56, 2:81–82.

59 Grote's use of comparative analogies in his *History of Greece* is documented in Liddel 2014. Especially pertinent here are the sections on comparative ethnography and early Athens (Liddel 2014, 223–28 and 231–33). On Grote's and Niebuhr's comparativism in the context of the progression from kinship-based to state-based organization, see Varto 2014, 501–8.

60 Huxley 1996, 29–30.

61 Grote 1846–56, 2:79.

Grote also recounts the mythology of Greek antiquity as if he is recording the beliefs of a foreign people. He tells the stories “briefly, but literally, treating them simply as myths springing from the same creative imagination.”⁶² Grote was also interested in recording the stories as the ancient Greeks knew them. He does not try to analyse the figures of the gods allegorically in order to “create a coherent body of physical doctrine,” as his contemporaries seemed to be interested in doing.⁶³ He writes, “I maintain, moreover, fully, the character of these great divine agents as Persons, which is the light in which they presented themselves to the Homeric or Hesiodic audience.”⁶⁴ To do otherwise “would be inconsistent with all reasonable presumptions respecting the age or society in which they arose.”⁶⁵ Myths and legends could not be used for narrative history, unless they could be verified by other means. However, myths and legends were important parts of a people’s religion and self-understanding. As such, they should not be analysed except on their own terms. He writes, “Grecian myths cannot be either understood or appreciated except with reference to the system of conceptions and belief of the ages in which they arose.”⁶⁶ In a move reminiscent of ethnography, he treated the myths and beliefs of the Greeks as important for knowing their “mind.” And in a move reminiscent of ethnology, he considered how that mind grew out of those myths and beliefs and into another intellectual stage.⁶⁷

This idea that a people’s myths and beliefs are indicative of their intellectual development, belongs to Grote’s deliberate progressivism. Grote wrote his Greek history to oppose the earlier anti-democratic histories of Gillies and Mitford.⁶⁸ He sought, by following the principles of utilitarian empiricism, to

62 Grote 1846–56, 1:2.

63 Grote 1846–56, 1:3.

64 Grote 1846–56, 1:2. Elsewhere he expands on this realism of Homer and Hesiod to the ancient Greeks: “To us these mythes are interesting fictions; to the Homeric and Hesiodic audience they were ‘*rerum divinarum et humanarum scientia*’—an aggregate of religious, physical, and historical revelations, rendered more captivating, but not less true and real, by the bright colouring and fantastic shapes in which they were presented” (Grote 1846–56, 1:482).

65 Grote 1846–56, 1:3.

66 Grote 1846–56, 1:461. He writes this in a chapter entitled “Grecian Mythes, as understood, felt, and interpreted by the Greeks themselves.” In Grote’s history, there is no room for a Christian God guiding the course of human events and progress as there is occasionally in Niebuhr’s. For Grote, there was no good empirical reason to include the Christian God in the history of a people who had other divinities and religious practices and beliefs.

67 Grote 1846–56, 1:460.

68 See Momigliano 1952 (1994), 18–19; Chambers 1996, 10–13. Grote himself acknowledges this intent in the preface: “The first idea of the History was conceived many years ago, at

establish that Athens under its democracy in the fifth century BCE (and not its oligarchic past or monarchist future under Alexander the Great) was the golden age of Greek antiquity.⁶⁹ His was a Whig history of the progress of the Greeks from monarchy through aristocracy towards democracy. Grote painted this history as a growth from a primitive, myth-making childhood towards a civilized rational and democratic adulthood. His history celebrated democracy as a height of intellectual and cultural growth.⁷⁰ This arc was sympathetic to Morgan's ethnological story and belief in the promise of progress.

Niebuhr and Grote infused their early classical histories with ethnographic details concerning customs, institutions, and beliefs. Their histories were, therefore, a goldmine for later ethnologists like Morgan, who was not interested in historical particulars but in customs and institutions. These histories presented such ethnographic details in appealing progressive schemes, and the details were fleshed out with cross-cultural analogies. This ethnographic, comparative, and progressive character of the histories made them particularly suited to Morgan's ethnology, shaped as it was by the "revolution in time." Morgan, therefore, set classical history, as interpreted by Grote and Niebuhr, at the heart of late nineteenth-century ideas about the course of all human civilization.

The Greeks, the Romans, and the Iroquois

What did Lewis Henry Morgan do with the comparative, ethnographic, and progressive histories of Grote and Niebuhr? On a basic level, the classics provided cultural data that he could use to illustrate specific periods in his scheme of human progress. Thus, Morgan dedicates several whole chapters to the Greeks and Romans. However, Morgan's engagement with the classics in *Ancient Society* runs still deeper. These data were embedded within pre-existing progressive histories, which traced the Greeks and Romans as they

a time when ancient Hellas was known to the English public chiefly through the pages of Mitford; and my purpose in writing it was to rectify the erroneous statements as to matter of fact which that history contained, as well as to present the general phenomena of the Grecian world under what I thought a juster and more comprehensive point of view" (Grote 1846–56, v).

69 On Grote's relationship to James Mill and the Utilitarians, see Vaio 1996; Kinzer 2014. On his liberal and pro-democratic bent, see Momigliano 1952 (1994), 19–18; Chambers 1996, 4–12; Kiersted 2014.

70 Grote 1826, 278; 1846–56, 1: 460–61. See Varto 2014, 506–8.

crossed through stages of human development. Morgan saw in classical history a crucial move from kinship-based tribal organization to state-based society. This move was a fundamental component in the development from upper status barbarism to civilization, and a key link in his chain of universal human progress.⁷¹ The classics, as told by Grote and Niebuhr, therefore helped set the paradigm by which Morgan understood the course of human social evolution.

Classical history did more than provide data in Morgan's *Ancient Society*; it offered ways of interpreting, situating, and evaluating other cultures. The classics helped set norms, in contrast to which other peoples and their customs were found different and interesting. In performing a hermeneutic role, classical history contributed to an interpretive framework through which other cultures could be situated and illustrated. It also offered an evaluative measure by which the significance of other peoples could be recognised. The classics played these roles in Morgan's interpretation of aboriginal peoples in *Ancient Society*, in particular, the Iroquois, for whom Morgan had an early and enduring fascination.

The "Surprising" Institutions of the Iroquois

It really is quite surprising to find such permanent original institutions among the Iroquois, and still more surprising that these institutions have never seen the light.⁷²

Morgan began his inquiries into aboriginal family structures and institutions as a young lawyer in upstate New York. He and his friends were working to found a gentlemen's society, the Grand Order of the Iroquois.⁷³ And in it, they wanted to replicate the patterns of the Iroquois confederacy in the Order's constitution. This led Morgan, already clearly fascinated by the Iroquois, to research their political and social structures in detail. Finding the available books unsatisfactory or erroneous, Morgan began asking the Iroquois themselves. He made his inquiries through letters and personal interviews, and noted down his observations.⁷⁴ This interest soon brought him into contact

⁷¹ Varto 2014, 514–19.

⁷² From a letter from Morgan to the General Council Fire of the Confederacy, from 1845 (quoted in Tooker 1983, 145).

⁷³ Tooker 1983; Trautmann 2008, 40–49. For its inspiration in the warrior values of the Iroquois, see Moses 2009, 38–47.

⁷⁴ Morgan's early process is well documented and outlined out by Tooker 1983. See also Morgan's own journal entry on his initial inquiries among the Seneca (Morgan in White 1957, 260–62).

with Ely Parker, with whom he developed a long friendship. Parker would later become military secretary to General Ulysses S. Grant, and the first aboriginal person to head the Bureau of Indian Affairs. When he met Morgan, he was a young leader among the local Tonawanda Seneca, and he became one of Morgan's major sources of information on the Iroquois. Despite his inquiries, Morgan initially got many details wrong (not unusual for the beginnings of an ethnography). Crucially, he also began correcting his errors and assumptions. He even started to craft a manuscript, although it would be several years before he published anything substantial about the Iroquois.⁷⁵ This initial research, however, inspired important observations that shaped his later ethnology: reliable information had to be obtained from the Iroquois themselves; such information had to be obtained before it was lost; and initial assumptions could be very wrong.

With the constitution of the gentleman's society in mind, Morgan inquired particularly about the political and social organization of the Iroquois confederacy. He wanted to know how kinship groups were determined and led, and how they came together to constitute the confederacy.⁷⁶ That he looked specifically for institutions and offices indicates the prominence of Roman law in his educational background. Roman law set the categories of his inquiries, and Rome itself provided a model of a *populus* constituted of tribes and clans. Morgan was looking for the various parts that make up the whole of society, based on the Roman model. It was by comparison with this model, that he recognised a feature of Iroquois kinship that quite surprised him. In a letter from 1845 to the gentleman's league, he expresses his astonishment:

Their laws of descent are quite intricate. They follow the female line, and as the children always follow the tribe of the mother, and the man never is allowed to marry in his own tribe, it follows that father and son are never of the same tribe and hence the son can never succeed the father, because the sachemship runs in the tribe of the father [sic]. It really is quite surprising to find such permanent original institutions among the Iroquois, and still more surprising that these institutions have never seen the light. If I can construct a table of descents with any approach to accuracy, I will send it down to the [New-York] Historical Society. The idea at the foundation of their law of descent is quite a comment upon human nature. The child must be the son of

75 The gentleman's league, however, did not correct their constitution accordingly (Tooker 1983, 143).

76 Tooker 1983, 143.

the mother though he may not be of his mother's husband—quite and absolutely an original code.⁷⁷

The Iroquois system of matrilineal descent was surprising and novel to Morgan. It differed from the patrilineal norm set by antiquity and familiar to him from Roman law and contemporary society.⁷⁸ Roman law had so shaped legal and social thinking that its patrilineal systems defined human nature. The Iroquois system thus challenged common beliefs about human nature and organization. If Roman law had led Morgan to inquire after institutions and offices, its focus on patrilineal descent led him to recognise the matrilineal family structures of the Iroquois as unique and important. This key observation impelled Morgan down the path to becoming the father of kinship studies.⁷⁹ Bachofen in *Mutterrecht* (*Mother Right*, 1861) and McLennan in *Primitive Marriage* (1865) later independently advanced theories of a prehistoric matriarchy.⁸⁰ Morgan, however, was among the first to document and analyse such a system in detail, particularly in *The League of the Ho-Dé-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois* (1851).⁸¹ Viewing his inquiries through the classical lens of Roman law, Morgan thus observed the significance of the Iroquois descent system.

Morgan's interest in the kinship systems of the Iroquois and other aboriginal peoples continued during his travels throughout North America (1859–62). His writings from this period, published as *The Indian Journals*,⁸² and *The League of the Ho-Dé-No-Sau-Nee, or Iroquois* both contain frequent references

77 From a letter from Morgan to the General Council Fire of the Confederacy, from 1845, as quoted in Tooker 1983, 145. See also Trautmann, 48–57.

78 See Trautmann 2008, 39–40, 46; See Tuori 2015, 57–100, on the importance of ancient history to legal evolutionism.

79 In a journal entry from 1859 (published in White 1957), Morgan recounts the process that led him from the discovery of the unique kinship system of the Iroquois to writing *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity*.

80 See Kuper 2005, 71–74, on the relationship between Morgan's and McLennan's theories of matriarchy and marriage.

81 Lafitau recognized this system much earlier, in the late eighteenth century (Fenton and Moore 1974, CVI–CVII). Morgan does not, however, cite Lafitau and appears not to have read his work. It is, therefore, unclear the precise impact Lafitau's writings about the Iroquois had on Morgan, but it would have to have been indirect. There are similarities in how Lafitau uses the classics as recognizable analogies, focuses on institutions, and sees developmental stages, all of which suggest that Morgan belongs to a continuum of European and Western thinking about the Iroquois (see Solez, this volume; Fenton and Moore 1974, CIV, CVII, CXI–CXIX).

82 Morgan 1859–62 (1959).

to the classics. Morgan often illustrates customs and institutions by comparison with recognizable classical analogies. Morgan had since recognized that the kinship system of the Iroquois was not “a system of their own invention” as he had first assumed, but that it belonged to a common type of system, different from the classical and European.⁸³ In *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity* (1871), Morgan built on this distinction. He identified two types of kinship systems: descriptive and classificatory. The Greeks make a limited appearance in the book, appearing only as one of several peoples whose kinship systems Morgan covers. Ancient Greece had a rich nomenclature, but its kinship system was “not exceptional.”⁸⁴ The Roman kinship system and its terminologies, however, Morgan analyses in great detail.⁸⁵ The Roman system, he argues, influenced almost all later European kinship systems and terminologies.⁸⁶ Morgan then employs it as the benchmark against which to compare the kinship systems of the other Aryan peoples and then the rest of mankind:

The several forms of consanguinity which prevail among the remaining Aryan nations will be presented and compared with the Roman, and also with each other, for the purpose of ascertaining whether they are identical. After this the common system, thus made definite, can be compared with those of other families of mankind.⁸⁷

Morgan compares the kinship systems of the other peoples of the Aryan group with the Roman system. Then he uses the Roman model to delineate the “descriptive” type of kinship system shared by Aryan, Semitic and Uralian peoples. He then contrasts this type with the kinship systems of several peoples of North America, Asia, and the South Pacific to delineate the “classificatory” type. The Romans again provided the model by which Morgan recognised others as different and important.

The Development of “the Full Organic Series”

Throughout the latter part of the period of savagery, and the entire period of barbarism, mankind in general were organized in *gentes*, *phratries* and tribes. These organizations prevailed throughout the entire ancient

83 Morgan in White 1957, 260.

84 Morgan 1871, 30.

85 Morgan 1871, 16–28.

86 Morgan 1871, 16.

87 Morgan 1871, 29.

world upon all the continents, and were the instrumentalities by means of which *Ancient Society* was organized and held together.⁸⁸

Morgan's use of the classics is most developed in *Ancient Society*, the culmination of his ethnographic and ethnological thinking, which links several ancient and contemporary civilizations to one another in a grand evolutionary scheme. Beyond analogies, the classics in *Ancient Society* supply Morgan with kinship terms and typologies. These typologies became points of cross-cultural comparison, in particular, the *gens* and the *phratry*.⁸⁹ Viewing through a classical lens the information he had collected and recorded about the aboriginal peoples of North America, Morgan paired Roman and Greek terms with non-classical institutions. Thus, he writes about the "Iroquois *gens*" and the "Iroquois *phratry*." As noted above, classical historians had long since been doing such comparative work. Grote's and Niebuhr's histories contain numerous cross-cultural comparisons, especially with classical institutions like the *gens* and the *phratry*.⁹⁰ Significantly, both Grote and Niebuhr considered the Roman *gens* and the Greek *genos* to be the same institution. They also treated the evidence of the kinship systems of early Greece and Rome as largely interchangeable.⁹¹ The typologies, therefore, already existed in classical scholarship. Morgan built his own typologies out of them, making corrections where his American experience suggested the classicists were wrong.⁹²

We can observe in Morgan's chapter on the Iroquois *phratry* how important the classics were in constructing these typologies.⁹³ Morgan begins his chapter on the Iroquois *phratry* with the Greek *phratry*. He defines the institution and develops the typology from classical history, citing Grote on its structure and role. He establishes that the Roman *curia* was analogous to the Greek *phratry* by citing Dionysius of Halicarnassus.⁹⁴ Morgan then fleshes the typology out with reference to the particulars of the Greek *phratry*, "its known objects and functions in the earlier and later periods."⁹⁵ He mainly refers to the Athenian *phratry*, as it survived the formation of the state under Cleisthenes

88 Morgan 1877 (1878), preface.

89 Tooker 1979, 131.

90 Grote and Niebuhr compare Greek and Roman *gentes* to Scottish, Irish, Albanian, Germanic, and aboriginal American kinship institutions. See Varto 2014, 502–3, 505–6.

91 Varto 2014, 503, 505.

92 These corrections and their "American" impetus will be discussed below.

93 The same can be said for his chapter on the Iroquois *gens*, tribe, and confederacy.

94 Morgan 1877 (1878), 89. Dion. Hal. 2.7 and 2.13.

95 Morgan 1877 (1878), 89.

(in his view of Greek history). He claims *phratries* had a role in special religious rites, prosecuted murders of their members, and oversaw ritual purification for murderers who escaped punishment. On this last role, Morgan cites Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.⁹⁶ To these functions, he adds a further list of features and roles he attributes to the Greek *phratry*: "the common tables, the public games, the funerals of distinguished men, the earliest army organization, and the proceedings of councils, as well as in the observance of religious rites and in the guardianship of social privileges."⁹⁷ Morgan seems to derive these from his understanding of the "analogous" Roman *curia*. Only after he establishes the typology using classical evidence, does Morgan identify the presence of such a *phratry* among "a large number of tribes of the American aborigines."⁹⁸ Then he gives the particulars of the Iroquois *phratry*.

Morgan places the Iroquois *phratry* in a second stage of Iroquois development, just as he places it as the product of natural growth in an earlier stage of development among the Greeks and Romans. But Morgan also contrasts the Iroquois *phratry* with the classical *phratry*. They belong to different ethnical stages:

Unlike the Grecian *phratry* and the Roman *curia* it had no official head. There was no chief of the *phratry* as such, and no religious functionaries belonging to it as distinguished from the *gens* and tribe. The phratric institution among the Iroquois was in its rudimentary archaic form; but it grew into life by natural and inevitable development, and remained permanent because it met necessary wants. Every institution of mankind which attained permanence will be found linked with a perpetual want. With the *gens* tribe and confederacy in existence the presence of the *phratry* was substantially assured. It required time, however, and further experience to manifest all the uses to which it might be made subservient.⁹⁹

The *phratry*, alongside the *gens* and the confederacy, was natural. Among the Iroquois, however, it was not as fully formed, as it was in later "ethnical" stages exemplified by Greece and Rome. Therefore, it was the same institution, but missing some of the features that would develop in later stages. Among the

96 Morgan 1877 (1878), 89. Aesch. *Eum.* 656: ποία δὲ χέρνιψ φρατέρων προσδέξεται; "Which *phratry* will receive him at their holy waters?"

97 Morgan 1877 (1878), 90.

98 Morgan 1877 (1878), 90.

99 Morgan 1877 (1878), 97–98.

“Village Indians of Mexico and Central America,” Morgan recognizes a more fully realized and powerful *phratry* than among the Iroquois. He sees this in their *phratry*’s role in military divisions. He establishes this military function of the more advanced *phratry* by reference to the military function of the Homeric *phratry*.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the Greek and Roman institution provides the template with which to recognize and assess the development of the *phratry* among other peoples.

Morgan identifies aboriginal kinship institutions as the same type of institutions as the Greeks and Romans had, only in an earlier stage of social evolution. He also uses those typologies to identify a progressive sequence. The classics give Morgan comparative typologies within a *developmental* hermeneutic pattern. This pattern is a set of interrelated typologies as they changed over time: the *gens*, the *phratry*, the tribe, and the collectivity of tribes (Morgan identifies this collectivity of tribes as the Greek *demos*, Roman *populus*, and the Iroquois confederacy). He then finds this set or “full organic series,” derived from Greek and Roman antiquity, in North America: “It can now be asserted that the full organic series of *Ancient Society* exists in full vitality upon the American continent; namely, the *gens*, the *phratry*, the tribe, and the confederacy of tribes.”¹⁰¹ Morgan both identifies and interprets his American material by reference and comparison to a classical pattern.

The structure of the second part of *Ancient Society*, “Growth of the Idea of Government,” (see Table 2.1) illustrates how Morgan uses the hermeneutic pattern. He uses it to identify the set of typologies among the Iroquois, Aztec, and Greeks and Romans, in successive ethnical stages. The parts of the “series” appear in the Lower Status of Barbarism (represented by the Iroquois). Then they appear in more advanced forms in the Middle Status of Barbarism (represented by the Aztec). They are even more advanced in the Upper Status of Barbarism (represented by the early Greeks and Romans) before the arrival of the state subsumes them in the Status of Civilization (represented by the classical Greeks and Romans). This scheme is, of course, ahistorical: the Iroquois represent an earlier *ethnical* stage than the Greeks and Romans. By tracing the elements of the series ahistorically, Morgan could reveal the changes that occur between evolutionary stages. For example, the *gens* was matrilineal among the Iroquois, but patrilineal among the Greeks and Romans. Therefore, the *gens* undergoes a change from matrilineal to patrilineal, between the Early and Late Statuses of Barbarism. Since this scheme was universal, matrilineal societies must

100 Morgan 1877 (1878), 98. *Il.* 2.362.

101 Morgan 1877 (1878), 101.

TABLE 2.1 *The structure of part two of Morgan's Ancient Society: 'Growth of the Idea of Government'*

Chapters	Ethnical stage	Themes
1. Organization of Society upon the Basis of Sex	Middle and Upper Status of Savagery	the organization of society before kinship-based organization
2. The Iroquois Gens	Lower Status of	the 'organic series' of kinship-based organization among the Iroquois
3. The Iroquois Phratry	Barbarism	
4. The Iroquois Tribe		
5. The Iroquois Confederacy		
6. Gentes in Other Tribe of the Ganowánian Family		the gens among other North American aboriginal peoples
7. The Aztec Confederacy	Middle Status of Barbarism	the 'organic series' of kinship-based organization among the Aztec
8. The Grecian Gens	Upper Status of	the 'organic series' of kinship-based organization among the early Greeks
9. The Grecian Phratry, Tribe and Nation	Barbarism	
10. The Institution of Grecian Political Society	Status of Civilization	the growth from kinship- to state-based organization among the early to classical Greeks
11. The Roman Gens	Upper Status of	the 'organic series' of kinship-based organization among the early Romans
12. The Roman Curia, Tribe and Populus	Barbarism	
13. The Institution of Roman Political Society	Status of Civilization	the growth from kinship- to state-based organization among the early to classical Romans
14. Change of Descent from the Female to the Male Line		the change from matrilineal to patrilineal descent around the prehistoric Mediterranean
15. Gentes in Other Tribes of the Human Family		the gens among several other peoples in different times and places

have also existed among prehistoric Mediterranean peoples. Morgan posits the Cretans (largely of mythology) and the Etruscans. He places them in the Lower Status of Barbarism, where he located the Iroquois of the nineteenth century. Changes, such as that from a matrilineal to patrilineal *gens*, served as the

punctuation in his grand evolutionary scheme. These changes all led toward the status of civilization. The organic series (the *gens*, *phratry*, tribe, and collectivity), the constituent parts of kinship-based organization, would develop until state-based organization supplanted them.

Greek and Roman history, especially as told through the progressive histories of Grote and Niebuhr, illustrated this crucial development.¹⁰² Occupying two ethnical stages, the Greeks and Romans straddled an important divide between barbarism and civilization. In classical history, Morgan saw how the elements of the “series” developed and gave way to the power of state-based organization. He saw how “barbarism” turned to “civilization.” Classical antiquity thus supplied comparative typologies within a powerful developmental hermeneutic. With this hermeneutic, Morgan could interpret the Iroquois and others, and situate them on the path to “civilization.”

“A High and Special Value”: Primitivism and Progress

The history and experience of the American Indian tribes represent, more or less nearly, the history and experience of our own remote ancestors when in corresponding conditions. Forming a part of the human record, their institutions, arts, inventions and practical experience possess a high and special value reaching far beyond the Indian race itself.¹⁰³

Morgan also worked the developmental hermeneutic in reverse. The Iroquois helped him interpret and situate the classical civilizations as well as his own. Their “high and special” status was as exemplars of early ancestors. The Iroquois represented an earlier ethnical stage in a universal scheme of social evolution. They were, therefore, valuable for illuminating the earlier periods of all peoples’ histories.

Morgan uses the Iroquois to interpret classical evidence and correct scholarship. Bringing his American experience to bear on classical history, he revises Grote’s progression of Greek history. Grote and Niebuhr, among others, held that early Greek society was from its origins monarchic. Morgan, however, argues that the early Greeks were essentially democratic:

The true statement, as it seems to an American, is precisely the reverse of Mr. Grote’s; namely, that the primitive Grecian government was essentially democratical, reposing on *gentes*, *phratries* and tribes,

¹⁰² Varto 2014.

¹⁰³ Morgan 1877 (1878), preface.

organized as self-governing bodies, and on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. This is borne out by all we know of the gentile organization, which has been shown to rest on principles essentially democratical.¹⁰⁴

Morgan's distinction between his and Grote's abilities to understand early Greek society, is in part based on differing political contexts. Elsewhere in *Ancient Society*, Morgan differentiates the freedom experienced under a monarchy (such as Grote did as an Englishman), from freedom experienced in a republic (such as Morgan did as an American).¹⁰⁵ Morgan's ability to understand ancient societies as an American is also based on the distinction Morgan made between himself and Maine. Morgan had the experience with the Iroquois that Maine, Grote, and Niebuhr lacked. This lack prevented them from understanding the nature of the *gens*. He makes this very argument about early Greek monarchy by referencing the Iroquois and others:

The question then is, whether the office of *basileus* passed in reality from father to son by hereditary right; which, if true, would tend to show a subversion of these principles. We have seen that in the Lower Status of Barbarism the office of chief was hereditary in a *gens*, by which is meant that the vacancy was filled from the members of the *gens* as often as it occurred. Where descent was in the female line, as among the Iroquois, an own brother was usually selected to succeed the deceased chief, and where descent was in the male line, as among the Ojibwas and Omahas, the oldest son. In the absence of objections to the person such became the rule; but the elective principle remained, which was the essence of self government.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Morgan 1877 (1878), 247. In this, Morgan seems to anticipate current classical scholarship that holds that the early Greek society was not monarchic according to its most common definitions and assumptions, such as hereditary power and divine right (but also holds that it was not necessarily egalitarian or democratic, and not without leadership and/or political and social hierarchies). Significantly, these arguments are frequently aided, as Morgan's was, by ethnographic analogy (e.g., with the people of the Nuristan region of Afghanistan and Pakistan) and/or anthropological terminology (e.g., big-man, chief). See Murray 1993, 35–68, esp. 53, 63, 67–68; Whitley 2001, 97–98; Hall 125–27; Morris 2009, 70–72; Rose 2009, 471–72. Finley, like Morgan, emphasized the overwhelming importance of kinship in dark age social and political structures (Finley 1956, 90).

¹⁰⁵ Morgan 1877 (1878), 252.

¹⁰⁶ Morgan 1877 (1878), 247–48.

Morgan turns to the Iroquois, Ojibwa, and Omaha, as the exemplars of the Lower Status of Barbarism, to interpret Homeric society, which he situates in the Upper Status of Barbarism. Tracing the development of leadership from the Lower to Upper Status of Barbarism, Morgan challenged Grote and Niebuhr on the nature of Greek political and social organization, and revised the course of ancient Greek and Roman history accordingly. Morgan placed the burden on historians to provide conclusive proof against the evidence of the Iroquois. They needed to prove that the succession of early Greek *basilees* occurred through inheritance and primogeniture *consistently* and not just in one or two examples. For him, the American evidence to the contrary was clear. Given what Morgan had learned about the nature of barbarism, established by his inquiries among American aboriginal peoples, he was convinced that the early Greeks were not monarchic. Morgan, therefore, reversed the analogy: the Iroquois corrected classical history as traditionally told.

Morgan also references the Iroquois in his chapters on the Greeks and Romans. He does so often to illustrate the same office or institution by comparing it to an earlier iteration. In his chapter on the Greek *gens*, for example, Morgan identifies the Iroquois and Greek *gens* as the same institution, only in different stages of development.¹⁰⁷ Writing on the growth of Greek government, he compares the democratic assemblies he observed in Homer and classical Athens with Iroquois practices. He writes that among the Iroquois, “the people presented their wishes to the council of chiefs through orators of their own selection, and that a popular influence was felt in the affairs of the confederacy; but an assembly of the people, with the right to adopt or reject public measures, would evince an amount of progress in intelligence and knowledge beyond the Iroquois.”¹⁰⁸ Morgan thus illuminates the progress of democratic practices between ethnical stages. He sees only early hints at popular government among the Iroquois (Lower Status of Barbarism). Then among the Greeks, he sees it blossom from the Homeric *agora* (Upper Status Barbarism) into the Athenian *ekklesia* (Status of Civilization).¹⁰⁹ Morgan uses the Iroquois to illustrate the same sort of progress elsewhere (in elective principles, offices related to military command, and the relationship between the *gens* and the tribe).¹¹⁰ The Iroquois, therefore, represent a point from which progress happened and against which it could be measured.

¹⁰⁷ Morgan 1877 (1878), 231.

¹⁰⁸ Morgan 1877 (1878), 245.

¹⁰⁹ Morgan 1877 (1878), 245–46. Morgan identified and labelled the assembly of the Greeks in *Iliad* 2 as a largely democratic “*agora*.”

¹¹⁰ Morgan 1877 (1878), 247, 254, and 296, respectively.

In Morgan's assessment, no North American indigenous peoples had advanced along the line of progress from barbarism to civilization. To see this progress, one had to turn to Greece and Rome, who both set the mould and pointed the way forward. The Iroquois and other contemporary indigenous peoples, instead, for Morgan, were living, primitive societies. To study such peoples meant to study humans as they were several millennia ago. North American aboriginal peoples were assigned the value of living fossils. They were considered more antique in a way than the Greeks and Romans! This is primitivism: the idea that some peoples still live as early man did, closer to the natural state of humans than others. There are many problems with and criticisms of primitivism, as a theory and as an approach to other peoples.¹¹¹ Primitivist approaches tend to treat indigenous cultures as if they are static, caught in time, and lacking dynamism. Trigger highlights one of the most troubling aspects of late nineteenth-century primitivism: looking at aboriginal societies as primitive societies led to treating the archaeology of aboriginal peoples as unchanging. This thinking fed into racist and harmful theories that aboriginal decline in North America could be attributed to an inability to adapt to inevitable change.¹¹² It is one of the great disgraces of North American history that the "decline" of aboriginal peoples and cultures was cast as inevitable, the product of a natural and ineluctable process of human progress, and not driven by the deliberate choices and policies of government officials, politicians, and colonial powers.

Morgan's thinking, however, is a little more nuanced. He combined primitivism and Eurocentric definitions of civilization with the universality of progress. He also recognized the destruction inherent in what he identified as progress. According to his universal trajectory of human progress, aboriginal peoples of North America would have evolved from barbarism to civilization. Progress was natural and inevitable. Such change, however, only happened very slowly and brought with it the destruction of what came before. European

111 The problems are too numerous to treat fully here. Kuper 2005 provides a critical account of nineteenth-century primitivism and its impact on policy and scholarship. Trigger 2006 provides a briefer account.

112 Trigger 2006, 175–79. As Stocking notes, Morgan's ethnology, with its emphasis not just on institutions but on mental development, became particularly influential at the Bureau of American Ethnology headed by Major John Wesley Powell (Stocking 1968, 116–17). The bureau, founded in 1879 by an act of Congress, oversaw the ethnographic records and material of American indigenous peoples and, more broadly, guided American anthropological research. Morgan's evolutionary scheme, therefore, shaped how the American government perceived indigenous peoples.

colonisation and the forward press of Americanization, however, had hastened change among aboriginal peoples and was overseeing their unnatural decline:

While fossil remains buried in the earth will keep for the future student, the remains of Indian arts, languages and institutions will not. They are perishing daily, and have been perishing for upwards of three centuries. The ethnic life of the Indian tribes is declining under the influence of American civilization, their arts and languages are disappearing, and their institutions are dissolving. After a few more years, facts that may now be gathered with ease will become impossible of discovery. These circumstances appeal strongly to Americans to enter this great field and gather its abundant harvest.¹¹³

Morgan's attitude in the preface to *Ancient Society* seems to be one of sombre and hopeless paternalism.¹¹⁴ Morgan himself saw the struggle and was witness to the destructive events. At times, he got involved. Ely Parker once invited him to help reverse the sale of land from the Tonawanda Reservation as a result of the third Buffalo Creek treaty made in 1842.¹¹⁵ The issue was settled in 1857 with another treaty and was part of a long legal struggle the Seneca fought to fend off removal to the west and to remain on their ancestral lands.¹¹⁶ Morgan's ethnology reveals how he ultimately situated impending losses of aboriginal land and customs. In the face of inevitable progress and its accompanying destruction, Morgan felt called upon to document this people as if they were endangered, to collect their arts, languages, and institutions like so many fossilized remains. There is a paternalism and an exoticism in this pursuit that recalls Morgan's old romanticized fascination with the Iroquois League. Perhaps, he felt the Iroquois could be "saved" through ethnology, and thus pass into recorded history, just as the ancient Greeks and Romans, fossilizing a stage of human progress.

What Morgan did not see, it seems, was how groups like the Seneca were hardly static. The Seneca adapted and would eventually succeed in their struggle against forced removal.¹¹⁷ Nor did Morgan seem to question the naturalness and universality of the Eurocentric paradigm of civilized progress

¹¹³ Morgan 1877 (1878), preface.

¹¹⁴ Contrast Morgan's statement with Otis T. Mason's belief, for example, in not just the inevitability but the *necessity* of progress and its destruction (see Kennedy, this volume).

¹¹⁵ Tooker 1983, 148; Hauptman 2011, 38.

¹¹⁶ Seneca Nation of Indians 2017.

¹¹⁷ They remain today on their ancestral lands in upstate New York (Seneca Nation of Indians 2017). The story of their struggle is told in Hauptmann 2011.

he inherited and adjusted. Shaped as his lens was by his experience with the Iroquois, it remained firmly attached to European ways of seeing the world. Russell Means emphasized such differences in worldview in a famous speech on the alienness of European conceptions of development and success to indigenous cultures: "Material gain is an indicator of false status among traditional people, while it is 'proof that the system works' to Europeans."¹¹⁸ Morgan also recognised this key difference, but he slotted this other way of thinking and being into a European-derived and classically-informed model of development.¹¹⁹ It was an earlier worldview doomed by progress and not a contemporary alternative. Morgan, thus, held aboriginal peoples against European standards and ideas, and saw not contemporary challenges to European narratives of progress, but the unfortunately soon-to-be fossilized thinking of an earlier time. Inspired in part by the ancient poets he loved, Morgan did, however, mount a critique of progress and modernity, as Moses argues, even as he enjoyed their benefits.¹²⁰ Morgan saw first-hand and lamented the destructive force of progress and its inevitability—another element of his American experience and classical lens.

The Tinted Lens of *Ancient Society*

Morgan crafted his ethnology by looking through a classical lens tinted by American experience. Drawing on the progressive and ethnographic histories of Grote and Niebuhr, Morgan employed a developmental hermeneutic of typologies to situate and interpret the peoples he was connecting in a grand ethnological scheme. Morgan's classical lens, however, had flaws. He was imaginative and speculative in his Greek and Roman history. He was mistaken about several features of Greek and Roman kinship structures and the details of classical history (especially according to current assessments).¹²¹ We should remember this when drawing upon kinship typologies based on classical archetypes.¹²² His work depended on classical scholarship, which

¹¹⁸ Means 1980 (2011). Means' words on the otherness of Marxism and European culture, more generally, also seem apropos here: "Marxism is as alien to my culture as capitalism and Christianity are" (Means 1980). Means' criticism of Marxism is rooted in its still European embrace of progress and materialism.

¹¹⁹ Moses 2009, 40–41.

¹²⁰ Moses 2009, 287–97; see also Moses, this volume.

¹²¹ E.g., Bourriot 1976; Roussel 1976; Patterson 1998; Smith 2006; Varto 2016.

¹²² See Varto 2010.

betrays some of the same errors of interpretation and the surety of positivism. All of it also predates the development of archaeology as a serious methodological discipline. For example, Morgan and his scholarly sources predate the discovery and sober assessment of the Bronze and Early Iron Age Aegean.¹²³ Without archaeology, the Bronze and Early Iron Ages of ancient Greece and Italy would remain very “dark” to us indeed. Major advances in early Greek and Italian history were only possible with the development of archaeology as a discipline, and, arguably, only with the rise of the “new archaeology” in the 1970s.

Morgan’s American experience and ethnography were not without their flaws either, especially from current perspectives. For all his insistence on the importance of ethnographic experience, he made errors in his ethnography of the Iroquois.¹²⁴ Moreover, the nineteenth-century embrace of European experience as the universal paradigm of human progress must be rejected for its subjectivity and empirical falsehoods. His nineteenth-century terminology of savagery, barbarism, and civilization is especially loaded. These terms followed the contours of European racial and cultural prejudice, and quickly came to imply inferiority and superiority.¹²⁵ It is language that still dogs discussions on immigration and multiculturalism.¹²⁶ Morgan’s belief in progress and social evolution, also, finds little home in current anthropology, and Morgan remained attached to the troublesome notion of primitivism, despite his experience with the Seneca and other Iroquois nations. Morgan’s position as a founding father of anthropology, however, is clear. His work on kinship and his early ethnography and ethnology shaped methods and theories in the field. Soon after his death, the burgeoning field would move on from the roots established by his seminal works, but largely through responses to them by figures like Franz Boas and Bronisław Malinowski.

123 Morgan was writing during Heinrich Schliemann’s archaeological activities, before Evans excavated at Knossos, and well before any consensus was to be had about what they found.

124 Tooker 1983. For accurate information on Iroquois governing structures, see Haudenosaunee Confederacy 2017.

125 See Table 5.1 (in Kennedy, this volume), for Otis Mason’s take on Morgan’s ethnical periods and the obvious privileging of Europeanness in defining what or who is “civilized.”

126 See Kuper 2005, 19–35, on the terminology and its Greco-Roman roots. For a recent example, consider how the Canadian government used the term “barbaric” to describe what it deemed problematic cultural practices of immigrant communities in the “Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act” passed in 2015 (Government of Canada, 2017).

What did this flawed and tinted lens allow Morgan to see? What is its legacy? Viewing the Greeks, Romans, and Iroquois through this lens, Morgan explored and accounted for a vast new depth of human history. He gave kinship a deep past, in particular, as Trautmann argues in his reassessment of Morgan's contribution to kinship studies.¹²⁷ In *Ancient Society*, Morgan considered peoples beyond an ethnographic presentism. He considered not only their practices, beliefs, and institutions, but how these related to those of other peoples. He did so not by way of historical cause and effect or cultural diffusionism, but by way of belonging to the human species. He did this with the Greeks and Romans, and with the Iroquois. In explicating the development of the whole organic series, Morgan situated the peoples he studied as "one in source, one in experience, one in progress."¹²⁸ This classically derived hermeneutic connected human societies and derived meaning from those connections. Between his classical lens and his American experience, Morgan saw a common humanity in the promise and the destruction of progress.

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¹²⁷ Trautmann 2001.

¹²⁸ Morgan 1877 (1878), preface.

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Culture and Classics: Edward Burnett Tylor and Romanization

Eliza Gettel

Edward Gibbon wrote his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in the late eighteenth century without mention of “Roman culture”: “culture,” in his time, belonged to plants and insects, not humans.¹ Around 250 years later, “Roman culture” has become shorthand for referencing a set of practices and symbols that we identify as indicative of a Roman way of life. When and how did “culture” enter classical scholarship? Furthermore, how did it become the central object of study of certain historical and archaeological discourses, namely Romanization? The interdisciplinary dialogue between classics, archaeology, and anthropology between 1860 and 1930 contributed to the ascendancy of culture as a subject suited for academic study. The work and intellectual context of Edward Burnett Tylor, the British anthropologist often credited with delineating the first anthropological definition of culture in English scholarship, exemplifies the close relationship between the disciplines. I examine Tylor’s use of classical evidence in formulating his theory of culture before turning to Tylor’s connections to classical scholarship, particularly so-called Romanization studies, which Francis Haverfield and R. G. Collingwood popularized in the early twentieth century at Oxford. When we trace the intellectual genealogy of “culture,” we reveal that the term is not a necessary historical tool and we are prompted to examine its use in current Romanization studies.

The story of how the term “culture” entered the vocabulary of ancient history is an international as well as an interdisciplinary one. German academia, the scholarly powerhouse of the nineteenth century, was a font of inspiration for British academia, which was beginning to professionalize. Early British anthropologists, like Tylor, turned to German ethnological

¹ I am indebted to Emma Dench and Panagiotis Roilos for comments on earlier versions of this chapter. Emily Varto also offered invaluable guidance regarding its production. This paper would not exist without the generous support of a Charles P. Segal Research and Travel Fellowship from the Department of the Classics at Harvard University, which funded archival work at the British Library and Pitt Rivers Museum.

scholarship in formulating their early theories of culture, just as Roman historians in Britain, like Francis Haverfield, turned to Roman historians in Germany, such as Theodor Mommsen, as models for their scholarship. The emergence of culture as an anthropological concept, therefore, had a similar timeline in Britain and Germany. In the 1860s, scholars in both countries began demonstrating marked interest in culture as an appropriate subject for scholarly discourse, and they attempted to delineate what the term referenced. These scholars often used the term in a less material, more humanist or idealist sense that stressed the development of the mind and faculties. Modern scholars often juxtapose Tylor's ideas about culture and those of Matthew Arnold, another British scholar, who in his *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) stressed a more idealist conception of culture that continues to feature in much modern classical scholarship.² Meanwhile, across the English Channel, German ethnologists and archaeologists had begun using *Cultur* to refer to a particular time period or to refer to a technological context (e.g., culture of the Bronze period or Bronze-culture). Around 1875, about the time that Tylor was defining culture with a more material sense in Britain, a more material and geographical definition became more popular and precipitated a shift towards our current anthropological definition of culture.³

Therefore, Tylor did not begin the scholarly discussion about culture, but he did help to push the discourse away from a more humanist definition towards a more material, realist one. Whereas humanist or idealist theorists of culture stressed the role of education in how people acquire culture, Tylor stressed acquired habits, customs, and institutions.⁴ Although Tylor's definition still had humanist overtones in that it assumed a progressive model for culture, his work helped set the stage for other anthropologists, such as Franz Boas and Bronisław Malinowski, to develop this secondary realist and materialist definition of the term into a more relative, sometimes racial, term that eventually produced current anthropological definitions. Under the influence of these scholars, culture would become the focal concept of anthropology in the 1920s, when anthropological fieldwork and museums became more formative

2 In Germany, concepts of culture influenced by Hegel's idea of "spirit" predominated. On Arnold versus Tylor, see Stocking 1968; Demarest 1990; Yatromanolakis 2007; Logan 2009. Yatromanolakis (2007, 35) has observed that an Arnoldian, humanist understanding of Greek culture still persists within classical scholarship on the Greek world.

3 On the British and German tradition, see Leopold 1980, 71, 91.

4 Bidney 1996, 24.

within academic circles and the term “culture” entered British and American dictionaries with a more realist sense.⁵

Given the intricate web of discourses involved it is difficult to trace who specifically influenced whom. The individuals focused on, including E. B. Tylor, Francis Haverfield, and R. G. Collingwood, drew on multiple discourses when producing their monographs and they often do not acknowledge the sources for their theoretical positions. We have to turn to their notes, letters, and other personal writings to piece together their influences. These documents reveal a common conversation about cultural change that involved scholars whom today we would ascribe to separate disciplines. A fascination with explaining similarities between groups of people, separated by time or space, gripped both the early anthropologists and Romanization theorists. One of Tylor’s explicit methods for explaining similarity across time—“survivals”—seems to have been particularly influential within archaeology and, by extension, within Romano-British studies where Romanization theories originated.

This conversation did not occur in a vacuum: greater societal factors, such as British imperialism and the rise of nationalism, shaped it. Certain related processes, such as the professionalization of academia and the rise of national and regional institutions for studying the ancient world, lie behind the interdisciplinary interactions sketched. Too often, however, the scholarship of the Victorian period and early twentieth century is dismissed for its imperial or national overtones. Nevertheless, as we will see, it still has value, particularly for examining the assumptions of our current, often relativist, pluralized, post-colonial, and globalized outlooks.

Edward Burnett Tylor and *Primitive Culture*

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor is often referred to as a father of anthropology, and he was arguably the most famous anthropologist in the world at the end of the nineteenth century. He was born on October 2, 1832, into a Quaker family in London. He attended a Quaker school in Tottenham until his family withdrew him at the age of sixteen to work in the family brass factory. While at the factory, Tylor’s health began to deteriorate and doctors advised him to travel. At twenty-three, Tylor toured the Americas, and he became interested in

5 Marchand 2000 outlines how museums in Berlin contributed to this shift. See Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 33–5, for dictionary definitions of culture. On culture becoming the focal concept of anthropology in the 1920s, see Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, where most of the definitions in Part II are from the 1920s on, and Stocking 1992, 284.

anthropology during his stay in Mexico. He wrote his first book *Anahuac* in 1861 based on the trip. After publishing *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* in 1865, he made his name with the publication of *Primitive Culture* in 1871 after which he was honoured as a Fellow of the Royal Society and Oxford granted him an honorary doctorate. He published his well-received *Anthropology* in 1881. In 1883, the university appointed him Keeper of the University Museum of Natural History, in which position he had oversight of the new Pitt Rivers Museum. Subsequently, he became the first Reader in anthropology at Oxford in 1884, and he became the first professor of the subject in 1896. He retired to Somerset as an emeritus professor in 1909, was knighted in 1912, and passed away at Wellington on January 2, 1917, at the age of eighty-five.⁶

Tylor set forth one of the earliest systematic theories of culture. In his earlier work, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, Tylor referred to culture twice but he more often used the word civilization.⁷ In *Primitive Culture*, however, he subsumed civilization to culture and offered a definition of culture as well as a methodology for studying it.⁸ The first sentence defines “Culture or civilization” as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”⁹ In the vein of contemporary Darwinian scientific theories of evolution, he argued that, generally, cultures tend to evolve from a savage to civilized state over time. In this regard, he aligned himself with progressive theorists of culture, such as John Lubbock, against degenerative theorists of culture, exemplified by the theologically oriented Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Whately, and the Duke of Argyll.¹⁰ While he recognized that the two processes are not mutually exclusive and that degeneration still occurs within evolution, he argued that overall more civilized characteristics tend to replace more barbaric ones, largely due to foreign rather than native action.¹¹ His argument rested on four basic tenets: (1) mankind has a psychic unity, (2) it proceeds through uniform stages of development, (3) scholars can reconstruct the stages through the identification of survivals, and (4) a comparative

6 For a more comprehensive biography, see Marett 1936, 13–16.

7 Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 10.

8 There are several British and American editions of *Primitive Culture*. I have chosen to cite from the third British edition, published in 1891, which included slight revisions of the 1871 edition, mostly regarding “savage and barbaric borrowings” from Christianity and Islam. See Lang 1907, 12, on the differences between the first and third editions.

9 Tylor 1891, 11.

10 Hodgen 1931, 311; Peckham 1970, 191.

11 Tylor 1891, 153.

method can reveal these laws. The organization of the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford based on typological series still offers a material manifestation of this evolutionary view. Certain aspects of Tylor's theory have persisted in scholarship; in particular, Tylor's ideas about animism and his doctrine of survivals remained prominent through the 1950s.¹² His overall theory, however, was eclipsed by models with a stronger emphasis on diffusionism, which preferred the spread of cultural attributes through contact between groups of people to the independent innovation required in evolutionary models.

Tylor's Influences and Use of Classical Scholarship

Tylor drew on classical and ancient historical scholarship in delineating his ideas about culture. Although supposedly the first gainfully employed anthropologist in Britain, Tylor did not manufacture the concept of culture or the model of cultural progression. Studies of the term's history have recognized its currency pre-Tylor, although they acknowledge that Tylor popularized the term since he provided a concise definition and a methodology for studying it.¹³ At least one contemporary British reviewer of Tylor's work recognized that the concept was an import from German scholarship.¹⁴ Tylor's work reflects the influence particularly of German ethnographic scholarship, which drew on evidence from the ancient world.

Tylor took up the German ethnographic concept of culture and imported it to English scholarship. Gustav Klemm's ideas about *Cultur-Geschichte* particularly influenced Tylor, who had read Klemm's work relatively early in his career and cited it in *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*. Klemm was an ethnologist and museum curator in Dresden. "Culture" in Klemm's ten volumes of his *Allgemeine Cultur-Geschichte der Menschheit* (1843–1852) was universal, both material and non-material, and teleological.¹⁵ He arrived at this conception by combining Enlightenment ideas about universal human progress with his interests in how objects could reflect social practices and lifestyles.¹⁶ Contemporary British archaeologists' fascination with typologies, which delineated technological evolution, reinforced Klemm's ideas for

12 Radin 1958, IX. See also the literature on the doctrine of survivals, for example, Hodgen 1931, 1936 and Leopold 1980.

13 On Tylor's use and popularization of the existing term, see Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 9; Leopold 1980, 102–5; Radin 1958, XIV. Regarding the idea of cultural evolution pre-Tylor (and pre-Darwin) and Tylor's contributions to the concept, see Harris 2001, 142–79.

14 Leopold 1980, 20.

15 Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 24–25; Leopold 1980, 87–88.

16 Manias 2012, 2, 9.

Tylor and manifested in his work, particularly in his emphasis on evolution in material objects. Material culture could be marshalled to serve Tylor's comparative method. The difference between Klemm's idea of culture, which was still tied to Enlightenment theories, and Tylor's more explicit analytical use of "culture" is encapsulated in the ancient authors that Joan Leopold identifies as models for each: Cicero and Horace were models for Klemm and Thucydides and Aristotle were models for Tylor.¹⁷ Other early German ethnologists who argued for the universal unity of mankind and the evolutionary development of civilizations and who influenced Tylor's work were Theodor Waitz, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Adolf Bastian, and Johann Bachofen.¹⁸ Lewis Henry Morgan's evolutionary work in America on ancient societies was also familiar to Tylor and was a similar source of inspiration.¹⁹

Eighteenth-century scholarship in Roman history also shaped Tylor's arguments in favour of a progressive theory of culture. In particular, he quotes Gibbon at length—for almost two pages—about man's ascent to "rule over the animals, to fertilise the earth, to traverse the ocean, and to measure the heavens" as the epitome of the progressionist school.²⁰ Classical scholarship additionally supplied him with counter-arguments related to contemporary degenerative theories, such as that of Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin.²¹ Tylor references the early nineteenth-century German historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr's *Römische Geschichte* as one of the inspirations for Whately's theory of degeneration. According to Tylor, Niebuhr attempted to undermine the eighteenth-century progressionist school by pointing out that its adherents cannot offer an example of a savage people having become civilized independently—an argument that Whately adopted and turned against the progressionists of the nineteenth century.²² The argument strikes at the

17 Leopold 1980, 87, 1.120.

18 Tylor's reading notes from about 1860–1862 feature German works heavily (Stocking 1987, 157). On Tylor and Waitz, von Humboldt, and Bastian, see Leopold 1980, 45; Smith 1991, 49. On the similarities and differences of Tylor and Bastian's ideas, see Bidney 1996, 201–8; Köpping 2005, 126–28. We know that Tylor read Bachofen's work, which argued for an evolution from matriarchical to patriarchal society within ancient groups, at some point in his career because he cites him in "On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions" (1889, 256), where he also mentions Bastian and Morgan.

19 Tylor cites Morgan's early work on the Iroquois in *Primitive Culture* (1891) in Volume 1 (1.454) and extensively in the chapter on animism in Volume 11.

20 Tylor 1891, 1:33.

21 On Whately's degenerative theory, see Hodgen 1936, 26–31; Grayson 1983, 217–18; Stocking 1987, 149–50.

22 Tylor 1891, 1:41.

problem of the origin of cultures: did they all originate in savagery with certain groups civilizing over time or did they begin as civilized groups with some descending into savagery? Tylor rejects Niebuhr and Whately's critique as unsubstantial since they also cannot offer an example of a culture descending into savagery on its own. What sort of evidence did Tylor use to prove his progressionist theory against these arguments for degeneration? Where did Roman and Greek culture fit into this scheme of savagery, barbarianism, and civilization? Here, we turn more squarely to Tylor's relationship with classics.

Tylor and the Classics

Tylor drew on primary Greek and Latin sources in delineating his theory of culture. Such practice was common in anthropology as well as other disciplines, but, given Tylor's non-traditional academic background, it is perhaps more marked in his case. First-hand knowledge offered by his biographer R. R. Marett confirms that he could "extract the tidbits from a Greek or Latin classic" but that he was not wholly comfortable reading Greek and Latin, probably due to his limited formal education.²³ Although he was not a classicist and Marett comments that he could not compete with Sanskritists or classicists on their own ground, his use of ancient sources was varied and comprehensive. His notebooks—now held primarily at the Pitt Rivers Museum and British Library—reveal how widely he read Greek and Latin texts, whether in the original or translation, and what he found of interest within them.

Tylor's Use of the Classics

Tylor read classical texts of all genres, while he prepared his works on culture. While his notebooks mostly consist of notes on travel accounts and regional histories, he also intersperses quotes from ancient authors. His research includes notes on Herodotus, Hesiod, Aristophanes, Ctesias, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Pausanias, Virgil, Vitruvius, Livy, Pomponius Mela, Seneca, Pliny, and Quintilian among others. These notes align with his more general interest in ritual and religion or strange "natural" occurrences. For instance, he has notes on the *flamen dialis* from Plutarch's *Roman Questions*, Festus, and Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*. Likewise, his interest in strange "natural" occurrences led him to outline Strabo and Pliny's *Natural History*. These examples provided the content for his comparative method. He juxtaposed

23 Marett 1936, 28n1.

examples from Greek and Roman society against others of Oceania, Africa, Europe, and the Americas to demonstrate the parallel developments of cultures across the world.

Within Tylor's work, classical *exempla* often feature not only as evidence for similar cultural stages across the world but as the precursors to modern "survivals." Survivals, which earlier scholars had often referred to as superstitions, are those aspects of "savagery" or an earlier stage of civilization that persist within a group of people. "Force of habit" accounted for survivals' persistence.²⁴ He delineates sets of survivals in each of his thematic chapters, which range across language, counting, mythology, and religion, and uses evidence from the ancient world to demonstrate their reality. For instance, Tylor refers to Ovid's reference in the *Fasti* to the common Roman objection to marriages in May due to the funeral rites of the Lemuralia, and he points out that people in England were still avoiding getting married in May even though the ancient reason no longer applied.²⁵ Likewise, to illustrate a shift from using games of chance to discern omens to using games of chance for enjoyment he traces a series of *exempla* stretching from Homer to Tacitus. Agamemnon and Achilles casting lots to fight Hector, Italian oracles' responses by lot, the use of knucklebones for divination in Rome, and Tacitus' mention of German priests drawing lots in the *Germania* demonstrate the original "serious" use of gaming pieces before their use for gambling in contemporary society. Similarly, Tylor notes that *kottabos* had a magical aspect related to the thrower's fortune in love before it became more about dexterity.²⁶

In using so many classical survivals to outline the progression of cultures, Tylor situates Greek and Roman society as a "middle culture" between an earlier savagery and contemporary civilization. In this regard, he follows Klemm: whereas contemporary German scholars figured Greece as the origin of culture, Klemm situated ancient Greek society as a median culture with links to "the Orient" of his time.²⁷ Tylor explains his idea of a middle culture:

It is mere matter of chronicle that modern civilization is a development of mediaeval civilization, which again is a development from civilization of the order represented in Greece, Assyria, or Egypt. Thus the higher culture being clearly traced back to what may be called the middle culture,

24 Tylor 1891, 1:16.

25 Tylor 1891, 1:70–71. *Ov. Fast.* 5.487.

26 Tylor 1891, 1:78–83.

27 Manias 2012, 22.

the question which remains is whether this middle culture may be traced back to the lower culture, that is, to savagery.²⁸

One prominent example, in which classical civilization serves as the middle culture, is astrology. Tylor notes that astrology existed in “lower” groups—here he identifies the Maori of New Zealand—but that the “civilized” nations of the ancient and medieval world systematized the practices and thus helped perpetuate certain astrological beliefs. He cites Cicero’s *De Divinatione* I and Lucian’s *De Astrologia*, and he points out that these beliefs continue to exist in contemporary society in a recognizable form, such as the idea that the constellations rising at a child’s birth affect its course of life.²⁹ Throughout his chapters, Tylor builds a similar hierarchy using Roman and Greek society as a link between “lower cultures,” usually located in the southern hemisphere, and contemporary English society. While the humanist concept of culture stemming from the Enlightenment figured classical peoples as sources for *exempla* to imitate, classical cultures for Tylor were a source of illogical modern practices. Classical culture was not the goal but something already surpassed according to an evolutionary perspective.

In arguing for a progressive theory of culture, Tylor acknowledged the similarity between contemporary ideas and Epicurean philosophy.³⁰ According to Tylor, Epicureans similarly debated how cultures developed, but he questions the evidence they provide. He indicates Lucretius as a preeminent example of the “supernatural progression-theory.” Tylor traces Lucretius’ theory:

Lucretius can describe to us, in his famous lines, the large-boned, hardy, lawless, primeval race of man, living the roving life of the wild beasts which they overcame with stones and heavy clubs, devouring berries and acorns, ignorant as yet of fire, and agriculture, and the use of skins for clothing. From this state the Epicurean poet traces up the development of culture, beginning outside but ending inside the range of human memory.³¹

Tylor argued that part of Lucretius’ theory must be true but another part untrue—his evidence was not sufficient for proving progression since tradition and human speculation had warped the narrative. Tylor, by contrast, proposed a scientific approach to the development of cultures which drew on material evidence and which he thought could prove Lucretius’ general tenet

²⁸ Tylor 1891, 1:32.

²⁹ Tylor 1891, 1:129.

³⁰ Tylor 1891, 1:37.

³¹ Tylor 1891, 1:40.

of progression. Thus, he wrote later in *Primitive Culture* that archaeology has proved Lucretius' succession of the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Age.³² Epicurean theory, as exemplified in Lucretius, was vindicated of its biases and marshalled in support of progression. Other anthropologists searched for other ancient authorities for the progressive ideal to legitimize their theory. In a collection of essays presented to Tylor in 1907, his colleague Andrew Lang pointed to Hesiod, Moschion, Herodotus, and Aristotle as early evolutionary thinkers.³³ The authority of these ancient, supposedly evolutionary, thinkers provided the progressionist school with authority and legitimacy against its rivals.

Tylor's Intellectual Milieu

Tylor's involvement with classics was not limited to his use of classical *exempla*. His prominence in British academic circles and his interest in antiquity brought him into contact with classicists and classical archaeologists. Through these contacts, Tylor not only enhanced his research but also shared his anthropological work with these scholars.

Tylor was a member of the prominent British academic clubs of his time, including the Athenaeum and Century Club, which put him into contact with the prominent intellectuals of his age from all disciplines. Tylor communicated extensively with Arthur Evans and Heinrich Schliemann and made use of their expertise and prominence in his research. When he visited Athens, Schliemann arranged for him to see the skulls from Chaeronea and promised to send him a box of Trojan antiquities upon his return to England.³⁴ Tylor's correspondence also includes several letters from the historian Edward Augustus Freeman, including one in which Freeman attempts to rectify some mistaken comment that Tylor made concerning Cato in a previous letter.³⁵ In another letter, classical scholar W. H. Forbes fulfils Tylor's request for citations regarding Greek revolutions and plague in Thucydides.³⁶ His documents indicate that within the Oxford bureaucracy he was familiar with the ancient Greek lexicographer Henry George Liddell, Roman historian Henry Francis Pelham, and Greek professor Ingram Bywater: they all co-signed a letter written by Tylor asking a scholar to give a set of anthropological lectures at Oxford.³⁷ He also corresponded with the historian George Grote, who thanked him for sending

32 Tylor 1891, 1:60–61.

33 Lang 1907, 2.

34 British Library MS50254, ff. 110, 18 April 1881 and ff. 144, 25 July 1883.

35 British Library MS50254, ff. 99, 14 September 1880.

36 Pitt Rivers Museum, Tylor Papers, Box 11 F.3 1896.

37 British Library MS50254, ff. 121, 1882.

him a copy of *Primitive Culture* as he believed he would learn as much from it as he had from Tylor's earlier work.³⁸ Meanwhile, John Stuart Blackie, professor of Greek at Edinburgh University, addressed a question about atheism to Tylor.³⁹ His students and colleagues deemed it appropriate to include several essays, which we would now classify as classical scholarship, in a collection of anthropological essays presented to Tylor on his birthday in 1907.⁴⁰

Indeed, Robert Ackerman has noted that the most sustained encounter between classics and anthropology occurred at Oxford and Cambridge between 1875 and 1925—the period of Tylor's tenure.⁴¹ Tylor's connections illustrate the turn-of-the-century fluid, non-departmentalized academic community, which allowed concepts to cross what are now disciplinary divides. Within this dialogue, anthropological work on culture did not only draw on classical scholarship but influenced it as well. For instance, the theory of culture, particularly the notion of survivals, that Edward Burnett Tylor laid out using classical *exempla* and scholarship, in turn, inspired the mythological work of John Cuthbert Lawson, James Frazer, and the Cambridge Ritualists, including Jane Harrison.⁴² Where else did this dialogue possibly lead?

Romanization and Culture Theory

Another sphere that Tylor's work may have influenced and that scholars have yet to explore is the field of Romanization studies. Since the study of Romanization has essentially become the examination of cultural change within the Roman empire, it has long been an area of classical scholarship with close ties to anthropology. We tend to focus on its more recent borrowings of anthropology, however, instead of looking back at the interdisciplinary nature of its beginnings

38 British Library MS50254, ff. 35, 1871

39 British Library MS50254 ff. 79, 1875.

40 Balfour 1907. Sidney Hartland wrote on the Babylonian rite at the Temple of Mylitta recorded by Herodotus (1.99); J. L. Myres presented an ethnological study of Herodotus' Sigynnae (5.9); and William Ridgeway, Reader in Classics at Cambridge, tackled the problem of the Dorians.

41 Ackerman 2008, 144.

42 Lawson 1910 drew on Tylor's theories. On Tylor and Frazer, see Boucher 1989, 201; Ackerman 2008, 145–50. Regarding Tylor, Frazer, and the Cambridge Ritualists, see Ackerman 2002. Comparatively, Beard 2000 traces Jane Harrison's life and challenges the idea of a cohesive Ritualist school. For more recent work that draws on Tylor's ideas regarding myth in the ancient world, see Detienne 2007.

and the lasting implications of these origins. Tylor's work helped to establish culture as an object of historical inquiry. It, therefore, prompted questions about how to study culture and how it developed over time—questions that the discourse of Romanization has continually attempted to answer.⁴³ To what extent, then, did the discourse surrounding culture shape the emergence of Romanization studies in the early twentieth century?

Culture in Ancient History in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain

To uncover the significance of the term “culture” in early Romanization studies, we have to consider what role it played in ancient history before the emergence of Romanization theory. In the nineteenth century, Greek and Roman historians largely used culture in its earlier humanist sense, but the term started to take on historical and geographical meaning in the late nineteenth century, perhaps due to scholars' connections to anthropologists and ethnographic work. Still, the term did not yet have the systematic meaning that Tylor granted it.

A survey of prominent British ancient historians' work from the mid-1800s to 1900 demonstrates the increasing presence in the classical scholarship of culture and the limited influence of a realist definition versus an idealist one. George Grote referred to mental culture and agricultural culture in the first eleven volumes of his *History of Greece*. In the twelfth volume, published in 1856, we find a use of “culture” that seems to approximate a modern definition, but his use of the term seems more in line with a philosophical definition tied to the concept of “spirit,” stemming from the work of Kant and Hegel.⁴⁴ Given that Grote was drawing heavily on Droysen in this part of his work and that Hegel largely inspired Droysen's philosophy of history, this reading of Grote's use of the term “culture” seems cogent. Grote and Tylor's correspondence indicates that the historian received *Primitive Culture* just before his death. We can only speculate whether it would have precipitated a shift in how he used the term.

Within Roman history, scholars such as Henry Francis Pelham and Edward Augustus Freeman, seem to have associated culture with Greek phenomena. Pelham, Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford, primarily used the term to refer to Greek society or groups heavily influenced by the Greeks, such as the Etruscans, in his *Outlines of Roman History* (1893).⁴⁵ We find a

43 On Tylor's legacy, see Logan 2009, 1.

44 Grote refers to the “systematic diffusion of Hellenic culture for the improvement of mankind” (1856, 357). On this philosophical definition of culture, see Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 18.

45 Pelham 1893, 36, 539, 548.

similar Greekness of culture in Edward Augustus Freeman's (1823–1892) historical writings. For him, culture was developmental but non-material.⁴⁶ This patterning in the term's use and the pre-eminence granted to Hellenic culture in mid- to late nineteenth-century British society—exemplified in the importance placed on Greek philosophy and the requirement to read Greek for an Oxford degree—seems to suggest that in ancient history the term still had a strongly humanist flavour that connoted a people's high level of education and thus civilization.

Tylor's material, structural vision had yet to find firm ground within ancient history. Perhaps the closest example we find to Tylor's views is the work of George Rawlinson, who himself had connections to contemporary ethnographic work. George Rawlinson drew on the ethnographic work of the Near East that his brother Henry conducted through the British imperial apparatus and cited "culture" sporadically with regards to the mixing of peoples and the level of civilization in his *Manual of Ancient History* (1869) and his *History of Phoenicia* (1889). Similarly to Tylor, the Rawlinsons viewed the ancient and modern as continuous and suited to comparison, but they downplayed development, and for George, in particular, comparison proved the superiority of his own religious beliefs.⁴⁷ Rawlinson's work may have contributed to a shift in the term's use within Greek history. For instance, around 1890, J. B. Bury used the term "culture" largely in place of the Greek term *paideia* in his earlier work on the Roman empire, but by 1900 he was using it to refer to both education and the mixing of groups of people in his *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great*.⁴⁸ Despite these small shifts away from an idealist definition, it is difficult to discern a coherent realist definition of culture in the scholarship of prominent ancient historians before Tylor's work reached prominence.

By 1945, the Greek philologist Werner Jaeger was able to offer the following criticism about culture within classical scholarship:

We are accustomed to use the word culture not to describe the ideal which only the Hellenocentric world possesses, but in a much more trivial and general sense, to denote something inherent in every nation of the world, even the most primitive. We use it for the entire complex of all the ways and expressions of life which characterize any one nation.

46 Leopold 1980, 90–91.

47 On the ethnographic work of Henry Rawlinson and the academic work of George Rawlinson, see Harrison 2013.

48 See Bury 1893, 559, on the equation of *paideia* and culture.

Thus the word has sunk to mean a simple anthropological concept, not a concept of value, a consciously pursued ideal.⁴⁹

How did the term “culture” inherit this more Tylorian, structural meaning within certain spheres of the classics? A contributing factor seems to be the rise of Romanization theory popularized by Francis Haverfield, who became Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford after Pelham’s death in 1907. Roman Britain, around which the study of Romanization largely evolved, was a particularly apt field for interdisciplinary dialogue to take place, since the years in which the province flourished (circa CE 117–284) were often outside the purview of the mainstream classics and ancient history tracks at universities.⁵⁰ Scholars of Roman Britain, such as Haverfield and his student R. G. Collingwood, therefore developed strong ties with related disciplines, such as anthropology, that also had a stake in the period and region.

Francis Haverfield (1860–1919)

In 1905, Francis Haverfield set out what has been considered the first systematic view of Romanization. In doing so, he applied the recent term “culture” to Roman society. Culture or focus on ways of life suited Haverfield’s more all-encompassing approach to change. In Haverfield’s work, culture appears as often as civilization: we find twenty-seven uses of “culture” in the eighty-eight pages of his *Romanization of Roman Britain*.⁵¹ Its frequency is more marked, given that “culture” did not yet have an anthropological sense in English dictionaries.⁵² Moreover, Haverfield’s vision of culture is more structural than that of earlier British ancient historians. For Haverfield, culture can be coherent, orderly, and definite. It diffuses and assimilates, or more specifically, other cultures assimilate to Roman culture:

Roman speech and manners were diffused; the political franchise was extended; city life was established; the provincial populations were assimilated in an orderly and coherent culture. A large part of the world became Romanized.⁵³

49 Jaeger 1945, XVIII, as quoted in Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 32.

50 Birley 2013, 299.

51 Haverfield’s *Romanization of Roman Britain* began as an address given to the British Academy in 1905. Three editions exist. The first in 1906 had few copies. The most extensively published version and the edition cited here is the 1915 third edition.

52 On the meaning of “culture” in English language dictionaries, see Stocking 1968, 72.

53 Haverfield 1915, 11.

Haverfield's idea of culture is more observable and material than that of earlier historians. Although Haverfield's use of the term is still heavily influenced by the humanist ideal of "high culture," it seems that a conception of culture, as schematized in Tylor's work, seems to have entered his discourse to an extent. Which aspects of the interdisciplinary discourse does Haverfield adopt and from where did they come? Can we trace these aspects back to Tylor?

Unfortunately, Haverfield was not explicit about his theoretical leanings and influence, and his personal archive, which might help us retrace his steps, is scanty. His student R. G. Collingwood painted him the "least philosophical of historians."⁵⁴ Whereas the archives of Tylor's personal materials are relatively comprehensive and centralized, Haverfield's correspondences mostly consist of scattered letters to other archaeologists, who often were in charge of prominent excavations.⁵⁵ We are largely left to examine his published work, which includes over 500 publications. His most well-known work on Romanization is *The Romanization of Roman Britain*, originally a lecture to the British Academy in 1905 and first published in 1906.

To understand how Haverfield shifted the focus of Romanization studies, we have to consider how he reworked the scholarship of his primary model Theodor Mommsen. Haverfield worked for Mommsen on the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, and P. W. M. Freeman has set out at length how Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte* influenced Haverfield's scholarship.⁵⁶ Mommsen had written about *die Romanisierung*, particularly about the epigraphic evidence for the spread of the Latin language throughout the provinces. Overall, he tended more towards political and military history, which focused on institutions, and did not adhere to any of the theoretical programs concerning cultural history circulating in Germany.⁵⁷ In his fifth volume, in which he writes about the *Romanisierung* of the provinces, he uses the term *Cultur* broadly to refer to a level of civilization in opposition to barbarism and evidenced by language and political institutions.⁵⁸ The term is closely tied to his emphasis on nationality and aligns with his greater thesis that the Roman Empire was a

54 Collingwood 2013, 83.

55 Freeman 2007, 16–17. The largest archive related to Haverfield is in Berlin and consists of his correspondence with Theodor Mommsen and other German scholars, including epigraphists Otto Hirschfeld and Emil Hübner.

56 Freeman 1997; 2007, 97–152.

57 Smith 1991, 186.

58 For instance, Mommsen 1885, 314 and 453. On the culture of the Galatians, see Mommsen 1885, 312.

nationalizing project.⁵⁹ For Mommsen, therefore, “culture” had developmental overtones reminiscent of the term’s high humanist sense.

Whereas for Mommsen “culture” indicated something largely immaterial, Haverfield, similarly to Tylor, considered “culture” to have a strong material aspect. Haverfield writes, “Romanization in material things means more than is always recognized.”⁶⁰ While Haverfield displays an emphasis on national sentiment that is similar to Mommsen’s, he ascribes provincial populations more agency.⁶¹ His evidence for this agency comes largely from the material record. Haverfield lauded and modelled Mommsen’s use of epigraphy and numismatics but found his classes of archaeological evidence lacking.⁶² He made wider use of architecture and small finds, such as brooches and ceramic evidence. The forms of houses and art could be constituent of culture.⁶³ Therefore, material culture offered Haverfield a window into the life of the governed.⁶⁴ His successor to the Camden Professorship, Stuart-Jones, noted the primary difference between Mommsen’s and Pelham’s work and Haverfield’s:

He [Haverfield] was less interested in the arts of government—though in these too, he was well versed—than in the life of the governed. How men lived under the Roman dominion, and especially how they lived in our island, albeit, as he himself called it, ‘an unimportant province in a vast and complex Empire’—this it was his passionate desire to know.⁶⁵

Such an interest in the life of the governed seems to have necessitated a turn towards a more anthropological vision of culture as a social structure with a material reality that encompasses every individual.

While the German tradition, refracted through Mommsen, seems to have been one model for Haverfield’s idea of culture, anthropology may have inspired Haverfield’s more structural and material understanding of the term. Haverfield was aware of anthropological interests and the proximity of his work to anthropology before he published on Romanization. When he

59 E.g., on the role of a *nationale Religion* in Boudicca’s revolt, see Mommsen 1885, 163–64. Also, on the similarity of the nationality of the Celts in Britain and Gaul, see Mommsen 1885, 168.

60 Haverfield 1915, 20.

61 Haverfield 1915, 14, 16.

62 Freeman 1997, 38, 43; 2007, 196–7.

63 Haverfield 1915, 55.

64 Haverfield references “material culture” at 1915, 19, 22.

65 Stuart-Jones 1920, 4.

writes about his travels in Galicia and Transylvania in 1887, he mentions that the towns he visited may be of interest “perhaps even for the anthropologist” because, while in some places the language and political institutions seem German, the overall character of the towns struck him “as German in a limited sense.”⁶⁶ In 1898, he published a paper about a Roman charm in the Middle Ages in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*.⁶⁷ Within the British university structure of the late nineteenth century, his interests in Romano-British archaeology fell partly under the umbrella of anthropology, as embodied in the Pitt Rivers Museum. Ancient historians, including Pelham and John Myres, were instrumental in establishing a committee for anthropology at Oxford in 1905. Because Romano-British archaeology had strong ties to prehistoric British archaeology, which was an integral part of an anthropological degree at Oxford, it was included in the diploma program in anthropology.⁶⁸

Furthermore, Haverfield appears to have been aware of Tylor’s work. Haverfield and Tylor ostensibly knew of each other because they held concurrent academic positions at Oxford. The Pitt Rivers Museum archive holds a letter dating to April 1894 from Haverfield to Tylor, in which the Romanist offers the anthropologist an image of a Roman game found at Cirencester.⁶⁹ Haverfield may have sent the image to Tylor, because the anthropologist had published three articles on the diffusion of games in the late 1870s, which were widely cited in the 1880s and 1890s.⁷⁰ The tone of the letter is informal—Haverfield addresses Tylor by his last name, dispenses with any lengthy pleasantries, and indicates that Tylor is already familiar with the game—suggesting that they were relatively familiar to each other. Inconveniently, however, we lack direct evidence that Haverfield read Tylor’s work on culture more broadly. If Haverfield did not, then Tylor’s influence may have been indirect. The exposure to anthropology may have come via archaeology, particularly prehistoric archaeology, where Tylor’s work seems to have had a more direct effect. John Evans and Arthur Evans were particularly close contacts of Tylor’s, and the term “culture” seems to have entered Arthur Evans’ archaeological work earlier than that of his contemporaries in ancient history.⁷¹ Haverfield was a

66 Haverfield 1891, 3.

67 Freeman 2007, 210. One of Tylor’s notebooks indicates that he read an article by Haverfield about Roman charms (Notebook at the Pitt Rivers Museum Box 3 3/10 XLII).

68 Clark 1989, 11; Freeman 2007, 168.

69 Pitt Rivers Museum, Box 10.

70 Gosden and Larsen 2007, 211.

71 Evans uses the term “culture” with a material sense in his *Antiquarian Researches in Illyricum* (1883). He also cites Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* in this work (Evans 1883, 108).

close associate of Arthur Evans, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, whom he considered a friend and with whom he co-authored a paper and collaborated on excavations.⁷² Therefore, Haverfield may have become accustomed to current anthropological thought or met Tylor through his work with Evans.

The aspect of Haverfield's work that most closely mirrors Tylor's anthropological definition of culture is the attention to survivals, a markedly Tylorian concept. About second- and third-century CE Britain, he writes, "Roman elements now dominate; in most regions native survivals are few."⁷³ Similarly, he opens his chapter about Romano-British art by referring to survivals: "Here the definite survivals of Celtic tradition are not perhaps more numerous but are certainly more tangible." He refers to survivals at several other points in the work, which intimates how embedded and significant the idea of survivals was in one of Haverfield's most important contributions to Romano-British studies. He posited a Celtic revival in the late fourth or fifth centuries CE, which small failures of Romanization made possible:

Two main conclusions may here be emphasized. First, Romanization in general extinguished the distinction between Roman and provincial, alike in politics, in material culture, and in language. Secondly, it did not everywhere and at once destroy all traces of tribal or national sentiments or fashions. These remained, at least for a while and in a few districts, not so much in active opposition as in latent persistence, capable of resurrection under the proper conditions.⁷⁴

The latter part of this formulation with its emphasis on "latent persistence" reads very similarly to Tylor's theory of survivals, in which survivals could also become a revival.⁷⁵ Archaeologists, such as John Evans, had adopted the term survivals in their work through Tylor, who had popularized the term as a technical ethnographic one.⁷⁶ The doctrine of survivals, therefore, may be a particular aspect of Tylor's theory that Haverfield was exposed to and amenable to because of his archaeological interests. According to Haverfield, superstitions and language—two aspects that Tylor pinpoints—were particularly likely to survive within the native culture beyond the Roman conquest. In this regard, more anthropological survivals play a part in Haverfield's promotion of British

⁷² Freeman 2007, 192–3.

⁷³ Haverfield 1915, 17.

⁷⁴ Haverfield 1915, 22.

⁷⁵ Marett 1936, 26.

⁷⁶ Leopold 1980, 52–3, 144n35.

nationalism. The more structural, material understanding of culture in which they are involved is not at odds with the situations in which Haverfield uses “culture” in a more high, humanist sense. For Haverfield, the more anthropological conception coexists with the romanticized, nationalistic understanding of culture evidenced in Mommsen.

Therefore, Haverfield’s work does not model fully either Mommsen’s or Tylor’s vision of culture; it borrowed from various sources. Above all, Haverfield’s concept of culture diverges from Tylor’s in that it is not universal. Celtic culture exists, but primarily the Romans exhibit culture.⁷⁷ Haverfield worked on a smaller scale than Tylor or Mommsen. In scale, then, Haverfield is typical of the turn of the century shift towards studying individual cultures—largely mapping onto contemporary nation-states—instead of producing universal histories.⁷⁸ He focused on how Roman culture moved from the core, Rome, to the periphery, Britain. In this regard, he is often in line with proponents of diffusionism, the school of cultural theory that eventually eclipsed Tylor’s theory. Diffusionism arose primarily in Germany but had an influence in Britain as well, primarily through the work of W. H. R. Rivers (1864–1922). While evolutionary theories postulated inventive societies that progressed through stages, diffusionist theories traced the spread of traits through contact between disparate groups of people. Later scholars, particularly the so-called father of American anthropology, Franz Boas, set forth evolution and diffusion as incompatible approaches, but modern critics have largely overemphasized the difference between the two theories.⁷⁹ Diffusion played a part in Tylor’s evolutionary scheme: “It must be borne in mind how powerfully the diffusion of culture acts in preserving the results of progress from the attacks of degeneration.”⁸⁰ We should be careful, therefore, not to draw too firm a line between Tylor’s work and diffusionism. Given Haverfield’s philosophical approach to history, moreover, he may not have felt compelled to adhere to any particular school of thought but instead may have drawn on theories as appropriate to his evidence.

Freeman has noted that Haverfield’s ideas may not have been as derivative of Mommsen as he had originally thought and that other traditions may lie behind his writing.⁸¹ Haverfield’s references to “culture” and “survivals,” as well as his ties to the anthropological community, suggest that the anthropological

77 On “Celtic culture,” see Haverfield 1915, 82.

78 Humphreys 1978, 18.

79 White 1945; Harris 2001, 173–6.

80 Tylor 1891, 1:39. Cf. Bidney 1996, 198.

81 Freeman 2007, 520.

discourse current at Oxford may be one of these other traditions. In this reading, Tylor's role in establishing culture as an observable social field detached from the state was an initial step in making Haverfield's most lasting influence possible: Haverfield established that Romanization could be a focus of historical study and not just a peripheral concern.⁸² Therefore, we should add contemporary anthropological thought, itself influenced by the German tradition, to the list of discourses that contributed to the early twentieth-century model of Romanization.

R. G. Collingwood (1889–1943)

Whereas Haverfield was not overly concerned with theory, his student R. G. Collingwood was almost obsessive about it. Collingwood is largely remembered in academic circles as a philosopher of history, but he also worked on Roman Britain in the 1920s and 1930s and published his version of Romanization in 1923 when the discourse surrounding the concept of culture was becoming more developed within anthropology.⁸³ Collingwood's extensive writings indicate that he was familiar with Tylor's work and, moreover, that he considered Tylor's approach to culture overly functionalist.⁸⁴ He noted that the essential aspects of Tylor's theory in *Primitive Culture* were: (1) the idea that "savages" could have some level of culture, (2) his doctrine of survivals, and (3) his comparative method. Collingwood still agreed with Tylor that cultures tend to progress, and he accepted Tylor's general idea of survivals across the progress of civilization.⁸⁵ However, he updated Tylor's theory of survivals: instead of seeing survivals as merely irrational holdovers from a previous stage of civilization, Collingwood viewed them as integral features of a hybrid society, often retained due to a society's emotional attachment to them.⁸⁶ Furthermore, he took issue with Tylor's comparative method and wanted to shift focus from the similarities between cultures to the differences.⁸⁷

In his work on Roman Britain, Collingwood examined the process of differentiation instead of the diffusion of a homogenous, universalizing imperial Roman culture, as Haverfield had done. Instead of following the traditional narrative that the Romans came, they conquered, and they departed, Collingwood argued that a fusion occurred between Roman and British

82 On Tylor's idea of culture as detached social field, see Demarest 1990, 36.

83 On "culture" in the 1920s, see Stocking 1968; 1992, 284–90; Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952.

84 Boucher 1989, 201.

85 Boucher 1989, 95, 197.

86 Boucher 1989, 201.

87 Collingwood 2005, 143.

cultures and that this fusion outlasted Roman governance.⁸⁸ The diffusion of Roman ways produced difference:

But as soon as we get outside London we find a quite individual civilization which is not British and not Roman but Romano-British: a compound of elements which can in many cases can be separated by analysis, but were never separate in fact.⁸⁹

What he identifies as Late Celtic elements of second-century CE pottery types, were not latent survivals of an earlier, less advanced culture anticipating a revival but instead an active part of the fused Romano-British culture that emerged. Similarly, he studies indigenous-style houses in the countryside that feature Roman hypocaust systems.⁹⁰ This fusion was not merely superficial; a survival was not an illogical holdover but made sense within the fused culture. The fusion was not confined to the elites but benefited both the conquering and conquered on both the elite and non-elite levels of society. Survivals were not yet indicative of resistance against the Romans. The fusion model necessitated a reworking of Haverfield's idea of a Late Roman Celtic revival. Instead of the Romans leaving and Celtic culture re-emerging, Collingwood postulated that invading Saxons wiped out the Romanized Britons.

Collingwood's comments about how Tylor affected scholarship on mythology seem to parallel his effect on historians of Romanization. Collingwood describes Tylor's legacy:

The great service of Tylor to his successors, so far as mythology was concerned, consisted not in what he did but in what he made possible. It consisted in opening up a new line of approach to the whole subject, very different from that which he followed in his own chapters directly dealing with it ... They took the view that the culture of a given people at a given stage in its development is a single whole, in which every element is connected with every other.⁹¹

Therefore, although Tylor himself essentially produced a universal history of human culture, he set the stage for scholars to study change within a more geographically and temporally limited culture. He established culture as a

88 Collingwood 1923, 12, 69.

89 Collingwood 1923, 67.

90 Collingwood 1923, 64.

91 Collingwood 2005, 148–49 (originally written in the 1930s).

coherent whole that scholars could study scientifically and he offered methods, such as the doctrine of survivals, through which to study change within the system. Romanization, as the study of cultural change within a Roman province, could not fully emerge until after Tylor established anthropology as what Collingwood termed a historical science.⁹² The window was only briefly open. In 1936, another Oxford anthropologist A. R. Radcliffe-Brown would stress that anthropology was closer to sociology than history.⁹³ This move set the discipline along a new path, which eventually necessitated the naming of a sub-field “historical anthropology,” and arguably contributed to the growing distance between anthropology and classics.

Epilogue

Culture continues to sit at the heart of Romanization studies. Despite Collingwood's tweaks, the concept remained relatively static for decades after Haverfield, in part, because the World Wars intervened. Even in the late 1980s, Reece pointed out that what Romanization meant was foreign influence: the Romans export their ideas, customs, goods, etc. to the provinces and the provincials increasingly adopt them.⁹⁴ The focus remained on the sort of progressive homogenization that Tylor and Haverfield promoted rather than the active construction of cultural difference favoured by Collingwood.⁹⁵ Within these models, what Tylor termed survivals became indicative of resistance against Roman influence. This resistance-based nativist approach to Romanization dominated the discourse in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹⁶ These studies arguably continued to retain an underlying evolutionary structure that stressed a continual progression towards Roman culture but focused on opposition to this evolution.⁹⁷

92 Boucher 2002, 308.

93 Collingwood 2005, 153; Boucher 2002, 303.

94 Reece 1988, 3.

95 Woolf 1998, 15. Cf. Webster 2001, 213–14, regarding how Martin Millett's version of Romanization (1990) mirrors Haverfield's.

96 Webster 2001, 212; Van Dommelen 2014, 43.

97 Hingley 1996 traces the evolutionary tendency of Romanization studies pre-mid 1990s in less explicitly evolutionary terms. Millett 1990 arguably retained this evolutionary structure while inspiring the turn towards more differentiated studies. Greene 2006 outlines how similar evolutionary metaphors lie behind contemporary studies of the Roman economy which drew on a similar intellectual tradition, including Tylor.

Since the 1990s, Romanization theorists have added nuance to the traditional one-sided narrative that juxtaposes Roman and native, and they have argued for more hybrid outcomes of the evolutionary process by stressing the active construction of cultural difference. Approaches such as David Mattingly's theory of "discrepant experience" have emphasized differences in the Romanization process across time and space.⁹⁸ These more recent approaches—many of which have drawn on postcolonial studies in history and anthropology—have continued to use culture as a primary analytical concept.⁹⁹ Greg Woolf has offered the most focused reworking of the term within Romanization studies. Drawing on the anthropological theories of Marshall Sahlins, he moves towards the idea of culture as discourse or debate regarding the practices that define a group. Yet, his definition of culture hearkens back to Tylor's original. Woolf defines Roman culture:

I shall define Roman culture as the range of objects, beliefs and practices that were characteristic of people who considered themselves to be, and were widely acknowledged as, Roman. Roman culture thus includes characteristic styles of pottery, building materials and costume; particular beliefs about the dead, tastes in beverages, and notions about education; customs such as baking bread instead of making porridge, building stone monuments instead of earthworks, and competing with one's neighbours through Latin declamations, rather than on the battlefield. Yet the definition must be even more complex than this, since Roman culture was not static and its composition was never a matter of consensus ... Becoming Roman was not a matter of acquiring a ready-made cultural package, then, so much as joining the insiders' debate about what that package did or ought to consist of at that particular time.¹⁰⁰

Woolf argues that this set of characteristics was not stable but a matter of debate for those that ascribed to a Roman identity—a view of culture that seems indebted to Foucauldian discourse.¹⁰¹ This contested, material definition

98 Mattingly 1997, 11–15; 2010, 289–90.

99 Webster and Cooper (1996) offer a range of postcolonial approaches to the Roman empire. The responses of *Archaeological Dialogues* 21, especially those of Versluys 2014 and Van Dommelen 2014, present different accounts of postcolonial theory's legacy within Romanization studies.

100 Woolf 1998, 11. Woolf sets up his position on culture in relation to debates within anthropology. For a helpful introduction to Marshall Sahlins' thoughts about culture, see Sahlins 1999.

101 On a Foucauldian turn within studies of culture, see Sahlins 1999, 410.

of Roman culture that is rooted in beliefs and practices seems to be similar to the definition on which other current studies of Romanization draw.¹⁰² For instance, scholars who have turned to globalization theory to understand the process of Romanization have drawn on such definitions. Richard Hingley, who has written one of the more comprehensive approaches to Romanization through globalization theory, defines culture as “the identity of people as a whole and the ways in which they live their lives.”¹⁰³ This identity and associated practices are neither stable nor bound to a territorial entity but enable a group to organize and communicate differences from other groups.

These definitions have clear Tylorian echoes but with caveats. The caveats suggest that such studies are uncomfortable with the strong materialist reading of cultural traits evidenced in Tylor and Haverfield’s work and demonstrate the disciplinary turn to more recent and more theoretical work on culture. In attempting to make an argument about culture with evidence that is largely material, however, these studies often undermine the theoretical stance that they set up. In framing the interventions that the studies aim to make and the larger historical narratives involved, Romanization scholars often successfully problematize the term “culture” and treat it as a term that acquired contested and politicized meaning over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, when coming to a discussion of the archaeological evidence, Romanization studies often fall back on reproducing Roman culture as an objective reality of the ancient world and suggest that culture is something that we can dig up and identify in the material record.¹⁰⁴ A reader is left wondering whether the focus on culture helps Romanization scholars answer their questions or whether the caveats that the term necessitates mask, or even hinder, more significant conclusions about how change occurs within society.

Due to a similar tendency within anthropology to approach culture as an essentialized and, at times, racialized aspect of a group, prominent

¹⁰² Versluys emphasizes that Romanization should focus on “(cultural) transformation taking pace in the context of empire” (2014, 8). The volumes of the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (TRAC) furthermore suggest that Romanization scholars, even so-called post-Romanization scholars, still feel the need to work squarely within the discourse of “culture” inherited from late nineteenth-century anthropology and continually tweak it to fit their projects.

¹⁰³ See Hingley 2005, 51–54, on “culture,” and Hingley 2005, 54–58, on “Roman culture” more specifically.

¹⁰⁴ See Hodos 2010 for a reflection on common assumptions when writing about culture and for a proposal regarding how we might reorient our thinking about culture and material evidence.

anthropologists, such as Michel-Rolph Trouillot, have called for anthropology to move away from culture as its guiding term and return to the overarching questions that scholars originally wanted to pose in focusing on culture.¹⁰⁵ Studies that broadly fall under the category of political anthropology have also specifically attempted to move away from culture as an analytical concept and to return to questions about structures and processes that lie behind state formation and societal change.¹⁰⁶ If we bring Romanization theory back in line with certain strains of anthropology, then we are forced to question the utility of “culture” as the foundational concept of the discourse. I do not mean to suggest that we ought to expunge “culture” from scholarship; “culture” is not the only neologism that we apply to the ancient world and contemporary terms of understanding are often useful and necessary for communicating about the ancient world and for revealing new facets of it. We cannot and should not attempt to move beyond trying to understand why people act the way they do—arguably the fundamental question around which “culture” and “the cultural” revolve.¹⁰⁷ However, we ought to avoid framing such questions as if they are dependent on the idea of culture and reproducing the term as a sort of Tylorian survival—a holdover that no longer makes sense for what we aim to accomplish.

“Culture” therefore deserves the same critical attention that terms such as imperialism, colonialism, globalization, and ethnicity have received within Roman history and archaeology.¹⁰⁸ The framework of the concept of culture, upon which Romanization currently rests, has certain drawbacks in its utility and such attention helps us recognize what its limitations are. Focusing on culture, for instance, pushes studies in the direction of certain scales of analysis. Romanization studies have historically struggled with scale. How does one map what is presented as an empire-wide process while staying attuned to local variations? *Provinciae* have been the common scale of analysis since Haverfield, and cultures are often mapped onto provinces in Romanization studies, particularly the north-western provinces. However, Roman historians and archaeologists have started to question the hegemony and reality of the province within scholarship on the Roman empire. Attention is now turning

¹⁰⁵ Trouillot 2003, 97–116.

¹⁰⁶ Lewellen (2003, 1–14) offers a helpful history of political anthropology. Ajantha Subramanian provides a useful introduction to seminal works in her Oxford Bibliography for “Political Anthropology” (Subramanian 2012).

¹⁰⁷ See Handler 2002 on the inability of moving “beyond the cultural turn.”

¹⁰⁸ On imperialism and colonialism, see Webster 1996. On ethnicity, see Gruen 2013. On globalization, see Hitchner 2008 and Hingley 2011.

towards both larger and smaller scales of analysis: empire-wide ones and microhistories or local studies.¹⁰⁹ This movement away from the province opens up exciting avenues for studying the Roman empire and offers possibilities for seeing the past in new ways. We should be wary, however, of remapping “local” and “global” onto the same “cultures” studied before and reproducing the drawbacks of earlier studies just with new terms in place of “cultures.”

If we consider what a focus on culture and identity markers has eclipsed, then we might reveal new categories of analysis that offer further productive avenues for investigating change under the Roman empire. Greg Woolf has recently mused (briefly) that focusing specifically on cultural change might obscure changes in other spheres and that perhaps we should drop an emphasis on culture in favour of studying economic, technological, and agricultural change together, along with any other changes that we might perceive.¹¹⁰ Versluys suggests the reincorporation of centre(s) of empire, monumental architecture, literature, and art into a “Romanization 2.0.”¹¹¹ I would add, however, that institutions are more markedly missing in narratives of Romanization, particularly of the north-western provinces. Current narratives describe cultural change as a process involving individuals and societies in the absence of structures that mediated, facilitated, and constrained this change.¹¹² Regional and civic institutions (such as the sub-province, *concilium*, *koinon*, *synedrion*, *boule*, etc.) actively shaped how areas experienced living under the Roman empire.¹¹³ Romanization scholars have moved in the direction of power

109 See Versluys 2014, 11, for a call for Romanization studies to move away from the province as the unit of analysis. Richardson 2008 demonstrates that the term *provincia* did not always denote a spatial unit. Romanists drawing on the framework of globalization have argued for reading back and forth across the “global” and “local,” notably Witcher 2000 and Hingley 2005.

110 Woolf 2014, 46.

111 Versluys 2014, 11.

112 Sahlins (2004, 140) levels a similar charge against Thucydides, which was partly the inspiration for this point: “Yet Thucydides’ framing of the individual/society opposition shares with Mandeville—and many others between and since—what can only be described as the simple-minded sociological dualism of an unmediated relation between them. Individual in particular and society in general confront each other over an empty social space, as though there were no institutions, values, and relationships of diverse character that at once connect and differentiate them.”

113 Roman historians have recognized the role of these sorts of institutions in a limited sense. Millett (1990, 7) and Witcher (2000, 9) both point to the role of institutions in the process of Romanization but focus on the top-down perspective of Rome constraining the actions of elites through these institutions. Scholarship on the eastern empire has begun to pay renewed attention to these sorts of institutions, e.g., Heller 2009 on the

structures but have not focused as explicitly on institutions.¹¹⁴ Potentially, scholars have avoided studying institutions because they are trying to avoid reproducing the descriptive institutional histories of the nineteenth century as well as the previously Rome-centric view of Romanization.

Renewed interest in institutions within studies of empire has suggested that what were seen formerly as purely structural or mechanistic aspects of imperial life (such as legal and political bodies, citizenship categories, and taxation) are formative of empire—both how empires rule and how people experience empire.¹¹⁵ Institutions, in this vein, are not only the product of empire but also part of the process of empire and thus integral to the change brought about. Local populations are not passive recipients of these structures but participants in negotiating the local reality of them. Therefore, they have a place in narratives of so-called Romanization, even ones written from the bottom-up. For this reason, ancient historians and archaeologists have begun to call for more attention to institutions in so-called Romanization studies. For instance, Anna Heller has proposed that examining the extent to which institutions transformed under Roman power can help address questions consistently raised in Romanization studies, and she illustrates this approach's possibilities using local institutions, such as the *boule*, in the eastern Mediterranean.¹¹⁶ Likewise, Andrew Gardner has offered more materially-focused methodologies for an institutional archaeology within Romanization theory and has focused particularly on the army as a mediating structure to

boule, Vitale 2013 and 2014 on *koina* and sub-provinces, and Edelmann-Singer 2015 on *koina* and *concilia*.

114 Jan Slofstra (1983) notably calls for a move away from acculturation models within Romanization to models inspired by state formation theories within social science that focus more concretely on structures of power. Slofstra stresses the potential of thinking about Romanization through the analytical concepts of peasant and patronage, in particular, and thus socio-economic transformations under the Roman empire. He focuses on hierarchical social relations versus making a shift fully to the institutions that these groups participated in. On Slofstra's legacy within Romanization theory, see Van Dommelen 2014, 42–4.

115 Much revised thinking about how institutions are engaged in the formation of societies is influenced by the work of Anthony Giddens. Regarding the ancient world and later empires, Duindam et al. 2013 offers legal and institutional studies influenced by recent work in the social sciences. For an archaeological approach to taxation and provinces, see Da Costa 2011. Ando (2006) also surveys several of these structures in his overview of provincial administration. Overall, within ancient history, such approaches have more commonly focused on the eastern Roman empire and the later Roman empire.

116 Heller 2009.

show how institutions can help alleviate Romanization's struggle with scale by linking up larger and smaller social scales.¹¹⁷ Building on such studies, an institutional approach, which pays attention to structures that mediated provincial groups' experience of Roman power, could provide a possible solution regarding how Roman historians might refigure the role of *provinciae* in studies. If studies focus on *provinciae* as contingent and constructed structures put in place by Roman imperial authorities instead of as absolute spaces, then the *provincia* would be implicated in the process of Romanization and would not be merely the container in which the process takes place.

Therefore, a turn back towards institutions and politics—not that of the nineteenth century but a version informed by work within social science, including political anthropology—may provide a way forward for so-called Romanization studies. In a sense, this turn would be towards anthropological work descended from the evolutionary, social and political work of Lewis Henry Morgan and Henry Maine instead of the evolutionary, cultural work of Tylor. Studies that move culture out of the spotlight would also be in line with the more ideal than material concept of culture that Marshall Sahlins, whose ideas Romanization scholars have drawn on to an extent, has argued anthropology should retain: culture as a structure that affects and orders the course of history but that is not necessarily materially manifest in discrete elements.¹¹⁸ Even if a return to institutions and politics is not the remedy needed or desired, scholars looking to push Romanization studies further or to move beyond Romanization ought to consider avenues that do not reproduce the emphasis on culture that has lain behind such studies since their inception. In engaging with new theories, classicists can continue to participate in what has historically been an interdisciplinary conversation and use the rich evidence and temporal depth of the classical world to contribute to and perhaps modify developing anthropological and sociological frameworks.

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117 Gardner 2013, 9–11.

118 See Sahlins 1999 and 2004 for more recent formulations of his ideas.

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From Motherkin to the Great Goddess: Matriarchal Myth in Anthropology and the Classics

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Many of us grew up in an era when anthropologists were understood to be academic professionals who learned odd languages and went to live with little-known tribal peoples for long periods of time, returning to produce monographs filled with data about how “their” people work, live, and build relationships with one another. As the Navajo joke goes, a Navajo family consists of a grandmother, her married daughters and their husbands, her daughters’ children, and an anthropologist. Today we have come to learn that anthropology is a more flexible discipline than this, with a broader field of study. Anthropologists, we recognize, can study skateboard culture in southern California, Sudanese immigrants in New York City, or nurses in Guangzhou, China as easily as they can plant themselves on a Melanesian island where they learn how taro is harvested and how boys are initiated into manhood.

Before these two iterations of anthropology, however, there was another, arguably the first, in which the primary haunt of the anthropologist was the library, and when his or her central task was to reconstruct the history of the human race by looking to “primitive” peoples: those who had escaped the evolutionary progress of the human race in remote locations on the globe, fossilized in an earlier state of human social, economic, religious, and cognitive development. It was during this iteration of anthropology, practised primarily in Great Britain between 1865 and 1900, that the belief that the earliest human societies reckoned kinship matrilineally took root.¹ I have called this theory “the myth of

¹ In England, anthropology adopted a particularly enthusiastic form of evolutionism, tracing humankind from its origins through various stages of social organization. This was less the case in continental Europe, where individual cultures were recognized to have their own *Volksgeist* and were not as easily subsumed to a single overarching evolutionary theme. For more on continental anthropology, see Eller 2011, chap. 6. Apart from Lewis Henry Morgan, American anthropologists tended not to jump on the evolutionary bandwagon and were later some of the first anthropologists to break away from this schema and introduce fieldwork as the new anthropological imperative, under the leadership of German-born Franz Boas (Eller 2011, 175–78).

matriarchal prehistory”: a story told by many narrators, especially over the past century and a half, that argues that early human societies were either woman-centred or woman-ruled until a patriarchal revolution occurred, somewhere between 8000–3000 BCE, that left men and male gods in charge.²

The earliest known variants of matriarchal myth in the West, far predating those of late nineteenth-century anthropologists, are from classical Greece. Before anthropological attention to matriarchal myth, it was almost exclusively materials from ancient Greece and Rome that were used to introduce the idea of matriarchal societies, a practice that reached its apogee in the work of Swiss philologist Johann Jakob Bachofen with his 1861 publication, *Das Mutterrecht* (Mother-right). British anthropologists of the late nineteenth century added something new, however. Though they occasionally reiterated the classical allusions pioneered in earlier versions of matriarchal myth, their primary *exempla* of matriarchy came from tribal and indigenous peoples around the globe. For a few decades, this version of human history held pride of place, at least in Great Britain. But by the close of the century, anthropologists began aggressively washing their hands of matriarchal myth. It was only then that the story was revived for use among classicists, particularly by Jane Ellen Harrison and the Cambridge Ritualists. Classical Greece was first the source for ideas of matriarchy; then the contributor of proof-texts for an earlier stage of matriarchy in human (European) history; then a footnote to a universal theory of matriarchy whose proof-texts lay far afield from the Mediterranean; and then, again, through a hand-off between anthropology and the classics, as a source for information about a prehistoric matriarchy in archaic Greece.

Ancient Greek tales of matriarchy lack the diachronic narrative of modern versions, in which prehistoric matriarchal societies give way to societies characterized by male rule. Instead, in ancient Greek thought, peoples who reckoned their kinship matrilineally or who were ruled by women lived on the borders of Greek civilization. As early as the fourth century BCE, Herodotus told his readers of the Lycians of Asia Minor, who named themselves after their mothers rather than their fathers.³ And, of course, the classical world was rife with tales of Amazons, female-ruled societies that cared nothing for any purported relationship between a father and his children and who either expelled men from their society or kept them completely subservient.⁴

Amazon tales continued to be of interest in Europe long after the fall of the Roman Empire and into the modern era as novelists, playwrights, and

² Eller 2000, 2011.

³ Hdt. 1.173.

⁴ Blok 1995, 1–2, 31.

conquistadors explored the theme—or attempted to find actual instances—of women-ruled societies.⁵ In general, these individuals thought of the Amazons as the ancient Greeks did: a society apart, geographically separate from the male-dominated societies with which they were familiar. In the age of exploration, Queen Isabella offered a reward to anyone who could find Amazons in the New World.⁶ Sir Walter Raleigh claimed to have found them,⁷ and though such findings by Raleigh and others were never confirmed, the dream lived on in the naming of the Amazon River, and of the state of California (after the Amazon queen Califia, featured in fifteenth-century Spanish adventure stories).⁸

A more serious inquiry into matrilineal societies in the New World was undertaken in the early eighteenth century by Joseph François Lafitau, a French Jesuit monk who served as a missionary in Quebec. Combining his first-hand knowledge of Iroquois and Huron customs with his training in the classics yielded an ambitious theory of ancient migration from Asia to America. From classical texts, in which he was well read, Lafitau gleaned the information that “the gynocracy or government of women was quite universally spread,” since “it existed not only among the Scythians, Sarmatians and Amazons in particular but it occurred in both Asias where the warlike women ... set the style for all the women living under their empire of making themselves rulers over their husbands.”⁹ Believing himself to have found similar social patterns among the Iroquois and Hurons, Lafitau thought it too outrageous to suppose that this social pattern could have been independently invented in the Old World and the New. Instead, he posited a massive prehistoric migration of the ancient Lycians across Asia and the Pacific Ocean to North America.¹⁰

In spite of these matriarchal themes popping up everywhere from classical Greece to the beginnings of eighteenth-century ethnography, it was not until the 1861 publication of Johann Jakob Bachofen’s *Das Mutterrecht: Eine Untersuchung über die Gynäkokratie der Alten Welt nach Ihrer Religiösen und Rechtlichen Natur* (Mother-right: A Study of the Religious and Juridical Aspects of Gynaecocracy in the Ancient World) that the myth of matriarchal prehistory emerged in the form we know it today: as a universal story of matriarchal origins out of which patriarchy either evolved or devolved, depending on the

5 Eller 2011, 17–24.

6 Weinbaum 1999, 131.

7 Brink, Horowitz, and Coudert 1991, 53.

8 Kleinbaum 1990, 94.

9 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:73.

10 Pembroke 1979, 277.

narrator's opinion. Bachofen's opinion on this matter was ambiguous. Officially, he regarded patriarchy as a necessary evolutionary improvement over matriarchy, but the nostalgia that suffuses his every mention of matriarchal times suggests a more ambivalent evaluation of the relative merits of matriarchal and patriarchal societies.¹¹

Bachofen, born in Basel in 1815, studied philology and *Altertumswissenschaft* (the study of antiquity) in Berlin under Leopold von Ranke, August Böckh, and Friedrich Karl von Savigny.¹² When he came to write *Das Mutterrecht*, Bachofen found virtually all his evidence for ancient matriarchies in classical sources.¹³ He was impressed, for example, by the story of the trial of Orestes as given in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. In Aeschylus' telling, Orestes is on trial in Athens for having killed his mother, Clytemnestra, in revenge for her having killed his father, Agamemnon (whom Clytemnestra had killed, in turn, in revenge for his having killed their daughter, Iphigenia, as a sacrifice to the gods). For Bachofen, this is the decisive changeover from matriarchy to patriarchy, because Orestes is accused of the worst possible crime in matriarchal terms—matricide—but is nevertheless acquitted when the goddess Athena breaks a tied vote by declaring, "No mother gave me birth. Therefore the father's claim / And male supremacy in all things ... wins my whole heart's loyalty."¹⁴

Bachofen posited a sequence of stages in human society that began well before the "events" narrated by Aeschylus. And yes, for Bachofen, the narrative of the *Eumenides* related historical events, or at least the mythic distillation of them. Far from viewing myth as invented or fictional, Bachofen saw myth as a sober, accurate historical document, "as rich and reliable in concrete results as any other source of historical knowledge."¹⁵ Relying on myth, and, to be honest, his imagination, Bachofen constructed a timeline of human evolution, beginning with hetaerism, a society brutally ruled by a male clan leader but in which kinship was reckoned solely through mothers owing to the clan's "communal ownership of women."¹⁶ Though this stage hardly sounds matriarchal, Bachofen notes that there was one "bright spot in life," one "light in the moral darkness" of hetaerism, and this was motherhood.¹⁷

11 Eller 2011, 55–60.

12 Cesana 1983, 25–26.

13 Pembroke 1965, 217.

14 Aesch. *Eum.* 735.

15 Bachofen 1861 (1975), 9.

16 Bachofen 1861 (1975), 90.

17 Bachofen 1861 (1975), 12.

Following hetaerism, Bachofen claimed that human history proceeded through three matriarchal phases: Demetrian matriarchy, Dionysian matriarchy, and Amazonism. Demetrian matriarchy emerged from hetaerism as women rose in rebellion against men's sexual demands and instituted monogamy and mother right. For Bachofen, this was a true matriarchy, characterized by female ascendancy in the home, in government, and in religion. This new form of government, said Bachofen, was instituted by force of arms.¹⁸ After that, things got a little shakier for women, as the tug-of-war began that would ultimately unsettle matriarchy. The seeds of women's undoing came from their adulation of their sons, which in religious terms took the form of the worship of Dionysus: of, says Bachofen, "male-phallic nature." However, Dionysus' reign was not to last, for he, like the mother, was instinctively drawn to material nature, which was, for Bachofen, the realm of women. Dionysus, the symbol of the era, is a god "forever moving between rising and setting, growth and decay ... yearning to merge with feminine matter."¹⁹

According to Bachofen, Dionysian matriarchy became so dissolute that women again rebelled, searching for the higher morality that characterized Demetrian matriarchy. This ultimately unsuccessful rebellion led to Amazonism, which for Bachofen was "a regression and perversion," a condition under which society was briefly dominated by "man-hating, man-killing, war-like virgins" who, oddly, could not refrain from their desire for Dionysian phallicism even as they were despising and killing men.²⁰ Such contradictions were common for Bachofen, who was never happier than when straddling a dialectic.

Out of this crisis emerged the Apollonian patriarchy, Bachofen's pinnacle of human evolution, the historical stage from which he perceived himself to be writing. Apollonian patriarchy is characterized not by the sexual and material, which are associated with Dionysian matriarchy, but by the spiritual. As Bachofen explains, Apollo "liberates himself entirely from any connection with woman"; he "allows the intellect to rid itself of material phenomena ... and rise above the laws of material life." This, says Bachofen, is "the permanent and complete defeat of the maternal principle," and "the decisive conquest of woman."²¹

Clearly, Bachofen's matriarchal myth is characterized by much *Sturm und Drang*. It is also inextricably interwoven with religion. To some extent, Demeter, Dionysus, and Apollo are symbolic placeholders for a variety of social

18 Bachofen 1861 (1975), 30.

19 Bachofen 1861 (1975), 315, 53.

20 Bachofen 1861 (1975), 43, 63, 315.

21 Bachofen 1861 (1975), 48, 53, 318.

structures, but they are also more than this: they represent realms of moral value that inform religious practice as much as social structure. Matriarchies worship goddesses above all other deities. When they falter in this, when they begin to worship gods too, their society is doomed to collapse and eventually to replacement by a patriarchal society with a patriarchal god.

Compelling in its absence in Bachofen's work is any reference to other historical trajectories taking place in other parts of the world. It would seem that Bachofen was simply disinterested in these. His scholarly interest, developed during his graduate studies, was initially in Rome. However, as he sought to probe further back, he was led to classical Greece, and then back to the archaic Mediterranean, finding there a religion centred on "the creative potency of the earth," which he believed was "nearly everywhere conceived as something female."²² These interests were typical of Bachofen's era and location. As Josine Blok writes, "classical antiquity seemed to pervade nineteenth-century society ... The authoritative grandeur of classical antiquity within this moral climate gave classical studies an exceptional place."²³ This was especially true in the German-speaking world, where philology, Bachofen's academic specialization, reigned supreme as the quintessentially German contribution to European intellectual life.²⁴ Bachofen himself described philology as "the beginning and the end of all his studies."²⁵

Understood in context though, Bachofen's interest in the classical Mediterranean was not just an accident of his scholarly specialization. It was a reflection of his era's dominant understanding of human history: that it began with the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, proceeded through the biblical and classical eras, and ran up to the present in Europe. The prevailing view was that the world had been created relatively recently (in 4004 BCE according to Bishop Ussher's dating of biblical narratives) and that around 2350 BCE it began anew when all save Noah and his family were wiped out.²⁶ Schemas like Bachofen's traced an evolutionary pattern in human social arrangements, but this was a brief trajectory set against a larger backdrop of devolution, of the fall of humanity from the perfection of Eden, and the scattering of peoples throughout the world after the catastrophic blunder involved in building the Tower of Babel. The time depth of Bachofen's matriarchal myth, then, was very shallow by contemporary standards, and its

22 Bachofen 1854 (1927), 11, 15; Bachofen 1967, 192–97.

23 Blok 1987, 16.

24 Smith 1991, 61.

25 Gossman 1983, 61.

26 Mallory 1989, 9.

geographical scope was limited to those areas of greatest interest to Europeans at the time: classical Greece and Rome.

When the myth of matriarchal prehistory emerged four years later in Great Britain in the form of John Ferguson McLennan's treatise, *Primitive Marriage*, it was in a very different guise. Though McLennan made occasional reference to classical texts, his primary interest was in "races in their primitive condition."²⁷ McLennan was hoping to duplicate, for human social institutions, what geology had recently accomplished for the development of biological life: establishing a series of fossilized strata that preserved earlier eras such that they could be analysed and their development traced by contemporary scientists. Sadly, noted McLennan, although "the geological record ... exhibits races as rude as any now living, some perhaps even more so," it then "goes no farther than to inform us what food they ate, what weapons they used, and what was the character of their ornaments."²⁸ To learn more, to unearth ancient social history, McLennan had to find his fossils among living peoples from "Central Africa, the wilds of America, the hills of India, and the islands of the Pacific," among whom he purported to find "marriage laws unknown, the family system undeveloped, and even the only acknowledged blood-relationship that through mothers."²⁹

McLennan was not alone in his admiration for the work of his geologist contemporaries, but he was quicker than most to flesh out its implications for the history of human society. It is difficult to overestimate the enormity of the impact caused by the discovery of human antiquity (or more properly, the abrupt general assent given to the theory of human antiquity, since the idea had been in the air for at least a century before).³⁰ Geological evidence of early human bones and tools among the bones of extinct animals gradually convinced sceptics that humans had, in fact, occupied the planet for many tens of thousands of years about which we knew virtually nothing. This discovery of human antiquity, typically dated to 1859, was even more revolutionary in that it occurred virtually simultaneously with Charles Darwin's work. Bachofen, it seems, was not aware of these revolutions when he wrote *Das Mutterrecht*, but McLennan, when authoring *Primitive Marriage*, emphatically was.

McLennan was taking on several settled truths in *Primitive Marriage*, but probably the most controversial was his assertion, soon adopted by the entire anthropological enterprise, that human beings began as "primitive" animals,

27 McLennan 1865 (1970), 5.

28 McLennan 1865 (1970), 6.

29 McLennan 1865 (1970), 8.

30 Grayson 1983, 28.

only gradually ascending to “civilization.” This revolution in thinking had multiple and far-reaching effects; certainly, one of these was the new significance it gave to the “odd” customs of “savage” peoples. With the discovery of human antiquity, these peoples, formerly deemed to be at best the very distant and very backwards cousins of Europeans (wayward descendants of Noah), quite suddenly sprung to life as reincarnations of Europeans’ very own great-great-great-(etc.) grandparents. They became proportionately more fascinating as a result.

Knowledge about “savages” was limited in McLennan’s time to the reports of travellers, adventurers, soldiers, colonial officials, and missionaries. None of these sources is considered authoritative by today’s anthropologists, but these were the materials McLennan had to hand when he developed his ambitious version of matriarchal myth that, with some variants, would soon reign triumphant among British anthropologists.³¹

McLennan lacked the nostalgic view toward prehistory that dominated Bachofen’s thought, and he did not share Bachofen’s fond, if ultimately dismissive, attitude toward women. The prehistory McLennan imagined was matrilineal simply because the “primitive horde” was promiscuous. As he explains, “blood-ties through fathers could not find a place in a system of kinship, unless circumstances usually allowed of some degree of certainty as to who the father of a child was.”³² These societies did not worship goddesses, or if they did, McLennan does not say so, nor did women rule over men. Quite the contrary, McLennan states explicitly that women in early matrilineal societies were the unwilling objects of male sexual exchange and furthermore, that they were frequently killed as infants since they were “less capable of self-support, and of contributing, by their exertion, to the common good.”³³

Though this sounds something like Bachofen’s stage of hetaerism, there is nothing similar to Bachofen’s Demetrian matriarchy in McLennan’s vision of prehistoric matriarchy. Indeed, Bachofen’s and McLennan’s versions of prehistoric matriarchy are so different in their source material and their assessment of the status of women that it may seem artificial to count them both as advocates of the same theory. Yet despite their substantial differences and their sense of being in competition with one another, each regarded the other man as holding essentially the same view. Bachofen complained that McLennan’s work was “very insufficient” and suggested that “historical inquiries do not admit of being treated as cases in a court of strict justice, by reasoning of a

31 Harris 1968, 161.

32 McLennan 1865 (1970), 65.

33 McLennan 1865 (1970), 57–58.

barrister,” and McLennan felt Bachofen’s work was inadequate since Bachofen “saw the fact that kinship was anciently traced through women only, but not why it was the fact.”³⁴ Their contemporaries similarly viewed these men and others as proposing the same thesis. Finnish sociologist Edward Westermarck, author of the three-volume *History of Human Marriage*, first published in 1891, claims that McLennan “set forth the same hypothesis as Bachofen.”³⁵ American sociologist Lester F. Ward lists Bachofen, McLennan, and American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan as all having “contributed to our knowledge of the remarkable institution of the historic phase called the matriarchate.”³⁶ The status of women and the role of goddesses, it turned out, were relatively fine points over which these men could differ without endangering their fundamental agreement about the female-centred characteristics of prehistory and the transformations that led to “civilization.”

It was McLennan’s version of the matriarchal theory that took root and developed rapidly in the emerging discipline of anthropology in Great Britain, spreading from there to the United States and continental Europe. The success of McLennan’s model can be seen most clearly in the focus of Bachofen’s subsequent work on matriarchy, which was not on classical texts, but on ethnographic reports. By 1870, Bachofen was contemplating a revision of *Das Mutterrecht* that would focus on “the remains of the maternal system surviving in all the peoples of the world.”³⁷ Writing to Morgan in 1880, Bachofen described his intention to “place the phenomena of so-called classical antiquity alongside corresponding phenomena in other cultures, be they those of other vanished civilizations or those of presently existing barbarian tribes,” while complaining that this work would not be welcome among his fellow German-speaking philologists because they are “sadly one-sided, and hardly allow their gaze to travel beyond the confines of the ancient world.”³⁸ This ambitious rewrite of *Das Mutterrecht* was never completed, but at his death, Bachofen was working on a study of “the role of the maternal uncle in the development of the human family,” an interest highly typical of British evolutionary anthropology.³⁹

No doubt in part because of their collective admiration for natural science and in part because of the excitement engendered by the Darwinian revolution, the central emphasis of British anthropological matriarchal myth was

34 McLennan, quoted in Hartland 1917, 4; Bachofen 1967, 479–80.

35 Westermarck 1891 (1971), 1:275.

36 Ward 1903, 300.

37 Fishbane 1981, 813. See also Graf 1988, 29–30.

38 Bachofen, quoted in Gossman 1984, 176n146.

39 Bachofen 1880.

evolution. "Primitives" were, in fact, primitive; British civilization was not. The anthropologists were intent on telling the story, novel against the long-standing narrative of biblical devolution, of a humanity that began as ape-like creatures but who, by dint of cleverness and eventually rationality, lifted themselves to literacy, art, and the rule of law.

In its attention to gender, the myth of matriarchal prehistory fed the contradictory social needs of late nineteenth-century Britain: the need to proclaim the essential rightness (in this case, the evolutionary fitness) of Victorian moral and political values, and the need to unsettle these same values, to lift off the lid and examine the simmering stew of cultural alternatives. What the consumer of the myth of matriarchal prehistory received was neither an uncritical celebration of patriarchy and empire nor a call for its downfall, but rather a spectrum of confused opinion that oscillated between the two.

Despite much slander heaped upon them in succeeding years, the Victorian anthropologists were not uniformly "in the rear-guard on issues relating to gender and marriage." They were virtually all politically liberal and regarded themselves as progressives; they felt that conservative arguments against women's emancipation and in favour of the patriarchal family were "reactionary and crude."⁴⁰ Some were themselves involved in agitating for change in marriage laws and made common cause with feminists. Lewis Henry Morgan, for example, left a bequest to the University of Rochester upon his death specifically "for the furthering of female education."⁴¹ Even Herbert Spencer, who among the evolutionary anthropologists articulated some of the most reactionary views on female nature in his disquisitions on the matriarchal thesis, had in his youth declared that "if he were to marry he would forget, if he could not destroy, the legal bond." Exhibiting an openness to women's emancipation that he would later disavow, Spencer used the basic principle of cultural variation to wonder in the early 1850s, "Who can tell us where the sphere of the woman actually lies? Considering that the customs of people differ from each other so widely, I would like to know how it can be proved that the sphere we assign to her really is here, that the limits we set on her activity are exactly the proper bounds?"⁴²

It was this line of thinking that excited late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century feminists and communists, some of whom adopted matriarchal myth as their own. For them, unlike the British anthropologists (or Bachofen, for that matter), matriarchal myth was a story of obvious

40 Stocking 1987, 207; Fee 1974, 88.

41 Fee 1974, 96–97.

42 Robertson 1982, 151; Janssen-Jurreit 1982, 62.

devolution—one that, intriguingly, mimicked the biblical narrative of the Fall. For these narrators of matriarchal myth, the era of motherkin was a paradise lost, and the patriarchal revolution was a disaster. Humanity's best hope was a return, in a somewhat more advanced form, to the society that flourished under the maternal system.⁴³

In *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, first published in 1884, Karl Marx's long-time collaborator Friedrich Engels undertook the challenge of writing a communist history of humankind. He was working with notes from the recently-deceased Marx on the writings of Lubbock and Morgan, among others. Engels also dipped into Bachofen, though mostly to dismiss him as a purveyor of "fancies," the foremost of which was his ridiculous—to a communist—belief that religion was the "lever of world history."⁴⁴ Engels tossed aside the caution that attended Marx's notes on his readings in anthropology and cribbed heavily from Morgan's *Ancient Society* to tell his own, materially-deterministic version of matriarchal myth.⁴⁵ Of course, Engels' foremost concern was to illustrate that society had originally been characterized by communal ownership of all goods. However, via Morgan, motherkin and the social equality of women made its way into the narrative.

For some late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminists, Engels' afterthought—the high status of women prehistorically—was the salient point. This was not a tenet they adopted from Bachofen and his idea of the Demetrian matriarchy, for they rarely cited Bachofen and probably never read him.⁴⁶ Instead, first-wave feminists relied on the writings of British anthropologists, though they had to tweak their narratives a bit to enhance women's status in prehistoric times.

Most changes first-wave feminists made to the matriarchal myth they inherited were matters of emphasis, but there were more extensive modifications as well. One of the principal innovations first-wave feminists brought to matriarchal myth was the further integration of Darwinian evolutionary theory into the narrative. These women were evolutionists, along with the rest of the liberal intelligentsia in Victorian culture. For them, much more so than for their communist peers, the historical decline in women's status

43 Eller 2011, chap. 5.

44 Engels 1884 (1972), 77, 79–80.

45 Harris 1968, 246; Vogel 1987, 81.

46 Eliza Burt Gamble (1894) includes a chapter on Bachofen, though she seems to be relying on secondary sources. Scholars sometimes mention Bachofen in connection with Elizabeth Cady Stanton (see, for example, Love and Shanklin 1978, 183n1), but I have not been able to find any evidence that Stanton was familiar with Bachofen's work.

had to be reconciled with their otherwise evolutionist assumptions. First-wave feminists managed this dilemma by trading biological evolution for cultural evolution and specifying that females—specifically as mothers—led the way in the cultural arena. For example, well-known American women's rights leader, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, declared that mothers brought the technologies of fire, pottery, the domestication of plants and animals, medicine, language, theology, and philosophy to the human race, all the while cultivating "the arts of peace, and the sentiments of kinship, and all there was of human love and home life."⁴⁷ As British feminist Frances Swiney put it more succinctly, "The primitive woman ... is the originator of all the industrial arts."⁴⁸

This glorification of mother love among first-wave feminists was at times so rhapsodic that it gave way rather easily to the divinization of motherhood in the form of the Great Mother Goddess of prehistoric times. With this interest in religion came a renewed attention to classical deities, especially Cybele and Vesta, but even to Hindu goddesses as well.⁴⁹ Dionysus and Apollo had no role to play in this story, though Yahweh was given some rather bad press for aiding in the creation of patriarchy.

It is no wonder that first-wave feminists found matriarchal myth attractive. In a few bold narrative strokes, it seemed to set the feminist movement free from the charge of their critics that male dominance was biological and eternal, and therefore inevitable and unchangeable. Matriarchal myth neatly undid the patriarchal knot held in place by centuries of philosophy and natural science, and it did so with the sort of good story that could easily function as a rhetorical device to arouse commitment to the feminist cause.

All this was done self-consciously. First-wave feminists were well aware of what they were trying to accomplish in their adoption of matriarchal myth and seemed to find it genuinely puzzling that others did not draw from it what they believed were the obvious conclusions. If female dominance, or even sexual egalitarianism, had at one time been the rule, then male dominance could not, by definition, be the only possibility for the human race. Matriarchy in the past provided precedent for matriarchy—or at least something different than patriarchy—in the future.

First-wave feminist narrators of matriarchal myth were far more likely than their male counterparts to cite classical sources, for the obvious reason that this boosted the political usefulness of their tale. A matriarchy that was not limited to "savage" peoples, but was present at the birth of civilization, was

47 Stanton 1891, 3.

48 Swiney 1906, 30.

49 Gage 1893 (1972), 39; Bennett 1912 (1967), 73–76; Swiney 1908, 81, 110.

much more exciting to those seeking to redeem women from the traditional historical narrative that held that they were forever the property of men, valued for sex and breeding, but not much else.

The first anthropologist to extensively and explicitly treat classical texts alongside the myths and customs of tribal peoples was Sir James George Frazer,⁵⁰ who, perhaps not coincidentally, was the first scholar given a chair in social anthropology at a British university.⁵¹ Frazer was not truly an advocate of matriarchal myth, but the strands he brought together enabled the reintroduction of classical sources into the anthropological version of matriarchal myth he inherited from McLennan and Morgan.

Frazer initially read classics at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was completing a dissertation on Plato and a translation of Pausanias' *Descriptions of Greece*. However, in 1883, after reading E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Frazer was inspired to turn to anthropology, and especially to the work on totemism, magic, and religion that would dominate his professional life.⁵² A year later, Frazer met William Robertson Smith, an Old Testament scholar recently arrived at Cambridge. An intellectual prodigy who became a professor at the seminary of the Free Church of Scotland in Aberdeen at the age of 23, Smith studied with the famous biblical critics Paul Lagarde and Julius Wellhausen in Germany and drew large crowds back home in Scotland for his lectures on the Old Testament. In 1875, Smith wrote the entry on the Bible in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in which he questioned whether Moses was, in fact, the author of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. For this, Smith was put on trial for heresy. Though not convicted—Smith maintained throughout his trial that he believed in the divine inspiration of scripture—Smith was removed from his post at the seminary in Aberdeen, after which he accepted a position as professor of Arabic at Cambridge University.⁵³

It was Smith who introduced Frazer to matriarchal myth.⁵⁴ Smith had become acquainted with McLennan at the Edinburgh Evening Club in the early 1870s and was instantly enthralled with his theories. Smith was particularly

50 As noted above, Bachofen tried to do this, but failed.

51 Ackerman 2008, 416.

52 Frazer 1994, XIII; Malinowski 1944, 179.

53 Smith 1989, 251–52, 270; Ackerman 2008, 146; Sharpe 1986, 79; Strenski 2008, 120.

54 There is some evidence that before Frazer met Smith, he was familiar with the debate between Henry Sumner Maine, who saw patriarchy as far back in human history as he believed could be seen, and John Ferguson McLennan, who of course argued the opposite. These were texts, especially Maine's, that Frazer would have encountered in his study of Greco-Roman Law (Fraser 1990, 22; 1991, 105).

keen on following up McLennan's hunch that there were remnants of a matriarchal kinship system among the Arabs. Smith looked, and then found just what he was looking for: "That kinship through the mother alone was originally the universal rule of Arabia." Smith published the results of his research in 1885, after he had moved to Cambridge, in a book titled *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*.⁵⁵

It was during this heady time that Smith struck up his friendship with Frazer, based no doubt on mutual interests, and probably strengthened by their shared ties to Scotland and the Free Church.⁵⁶ When the two men met, Smith was already famous, while Frazer was just beginning his career. Frazer dedicated the first edition of his *magnum opus*, *The Golden Bough*, "to my friend WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH, in gratitude and admiration."⁵⁷ Later, of course, their relative prominence shifted. As Frazer added a 1900 edition to *The Golden Bough*, and then a twelve-volume edition between 1906 and 1915, Frazer's fame eclipsed that of Smith.⁵⁸

In the first edition of *The Golden Bough*, Frazer did not even mention the then hot topic of matriliney.⁵⁹ In later editions of *The Golden Bough*, Frazer did discuss "kinship through females" as an important aspect of human prehistory, but he explicitly denied that there had ever been a time of women's power or of exclusive goddess worship. But at least some of Frazer's readers were happy to overlook his opinions on this, and many, including first-wave feminists, made Frazer's research a part of their evidence for prehistoric matriarchy.

Frazer's *Golden Bough* is a vast compendium of mythology and folklore from around the world. A few themes emerge, one of which is a mythic trope Frazer identifies in many different cultures: an archetypal story of a rising-and-dying god born of a mother goddess who gives birth to him, becomes his lover, and takes him back in death, only to give birth to him again.⁶⁰ According to Frazer,

55 Fraser 1991, 97, 106; McLennan 1865 (1970), XLII; Smith 1885 (1990), 178.

56 Fraser 1991, 106; Sharpe 1986, 81.

57 Frazer 1894, 3.

58 Frazer 1994, XL–XLI.

59 Fraser 1991, 106.

60 Frazer's theory was subjected to scholarly criticism beginning in the 1950s, and today scholars of religion have tended to denounce the "dying and rising god" trope as "a product of the modern imagination" rather than as an observable theme in comparative religions (Smith 1994, 100). Jesus, who, according to the gospels, was born, died, and resurrected, was a figure easily assimilated to the dying god trope that Frazer laid out in *the Golden Bough*. Frazer himself was aware of this, but throughout the decades in which he tinkered with *The Golden Bough*, he was rather timid on this point. Material on Jesus started out in the text, migrated to an appendix in a later edition, and was

this mythic relationship between divine female and male is found in religions around the world and is frequently ritualized with the annual or periodic sacrifice of priests or kings who take the role of the Goddess' son/consort.

Frazer begins the story of *The Golden Bough*—and certainly, it is more story than study—with an odd religious custom purportedly practised during ancient Roman times—one which Frazer did not accurately report, but rather cobbled together out of unconnected writings by Strabo and Servius.⁶¹ In a grove of trees sacred to the goddess Diana, located by the lake of Nemi near Rome, it is said that one tree was particularly sacred. It was guarded day and night by a priest who held the title “King of the Wood.” The priest remained armed at all times, for any contender who wished could come and kill him and thereby become the new “King of the Wood” until someone, in turn, took his life and replaced him. Frazer thrills readers with this “dark crime” surviving from “a barbarous age,” through which “the human mind has elaborated its first crude philosophy of life” and then announces his intention to use *The Golden Bough* “to offer a fairly probable explanation of the priesthood of Nemi.”⁶² Of course, the thousands of pages of *The Golden Bough* wander very far afield from the lake at Nemi, but Frazer nevertheless insists that it is this odd ancient rite that is the impetus for his entire mission. Frazer returns to Nemi at the close of the second edition of *The Golden Bough*, saying “our long voyage of discovery is over and our bark has drooped her weary sails in port at last. Once more we take the road to Nemi.” There Frazer fancies himself hearing in the church bells of the local Catholic church these phrases: “*Le roi est mort, vive le roi! Ave Maria!*”⁶³

This nugget—the Mother Goddess and her rising and dying Son—provided the essence of religion for Frazer. That religion should begin with a female deity when in his own time God was generally conceived of as male, Frazer puts down to the “simple and sufficient” explanation that early humans practised matrilineal kinship and worshipped their ancestors. In such circumstances, the only ancestors of any real account were female. Once worshipped, these ancestors became deified, became goddesses.⁶⁴ Frazer offers additional explanations as well. The Goddess is not only the quintessential female ancestor, she is also a

eventually cut altogether (Frazer 1994, xxv; Hutton 1999, 114–15). Readers, left to draw their own conclusions, made the connection and doubtless found the audacity of this comparison exciting.

61 Smith 1973, 343–45, 350.

62 Frazer 1994, 9–13.

63 Frazer 1994, 808.

64 Frazer 1994, 390, 395.

representation of fertility, especially of vegetation, which brings forth its own kind just as woman does through pregnancy and childbirth. She is “the personification of all the reproductive energies of nature.”⁶⁵ Though she has many names, she is essentially the same deity wherever she is found. Reproduction requires male participation, and so the Goddess must be paired with a God. Like the crops, this God grows quickly, bursts into flower, spills seeds, and then seemingly perishes for the winter months.⁶⁶

Frazer's emphasis on religion, and more especially on ritual (such as the killing of the king), was drawn in part from Smith's argument that in the early history of religions, ritual was vastly more important than creed.⁶⁷ In this way, Frazer brought Bachofen's interest in matriarchal and patriarchal deities back to the narrative of matriarchal myth.

This theme was eagerly taken up by Jane Ellen Harrison, who gave matriarchal myth a new life in the classics as its star was fading in anthropology. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Harrison was enjoying an intellectual renaissance in middle age, having finally secured a post at Cambridge University in 1898. Harrison began her career examining ancient Greek art but had gradually moved into the study of ancient Greek religion.⁶⁸ Harrison avowed that she could “see moving darker and older shapes” of preclassical religion, such as the Dionysian cult discussed by Bachofen.⁶⁹

Harrison was inspired in her research by the work of Frazer, describing her debt to him as “immeasurable.”⁷⁰ Frazer and Harrison knew each other personally, even studying Hebrew together for a time.⁷¹ Harrison and her colleagues, Gilbert Murray and Francis Cornford, excited scandal by describing the ancient Greeks in terms usually reserved for “primitives,” “savages,” and “barbarians.” They had, however, been preceded in this by Frazer, who described even *fin-de-siècle* England as rife with elements of earlier strata of human religion, one not only barbaric but often downright bloodthirsty.⁷² Frazer, however, was diplomatic and restrained; the less savvy reader could miss his devastating argument altogether. Harrison was more outspoken, saying of ancient Greece that its religion was dominated by orgiastic dancing and divine possession, and

65 Frazer 1994, 314.

66 Frazer 1994, 312, 314.

67 Ackerman 2008, 148.

68 Peacock 1989, 173.

69 Africa 1989, 22.

70 Harrison 1921 (1962), 548.

71 Frazer 1994, XLVIII.

72 Frazer 1894, VII–IX.

indeed that the entire basis of its society, so adulated by the Enlightenment intellectuals of Europe, was more emotional than rational.⁷³ Harrison's excitement with this thesis yielded her most influential book, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, published in 1903, which characterized pre-classical Greek religion as matriarchal and goddess-worshipping.⁷⁴

This anthropology-infused version of the classics, says Robert Ackerman, provided Harrison and others with "a new way of realizing the dream of classical philology—'feeling their way into' the mindset of antiquity."⁷⁵ Harrison's specific argument about the importance of goddess worship and women in antiquity never achieved the dominance in the classics that the matriarchal thesis had in anthropology in the late nineteenth century. Shortly after arguments such as Harrison's were advanced, there were those, such as H. J. Rose, who challenged them, seeing evidence for matriarchy in even archaic Greece as weak and inadequate.⁷⁶ By the second half of the twentieth century, such critiques were *de rigueur*. Classicists such as Simon Pembroke, Pierre Vidal-Nacquet, and Stella Georgoudi, among others, regarded ancient myths of matriarchy and Amazon tales as signs not of a preceding matriarchal society but rather as a tool through which the ancient Greeks sought to validate their patriarchal social customs and quell any anxiety associated with male dominance and the oppression of women.⁷⁷

However, commitment to the idea of prehistoric matriarchies in the Mediterranean has lived on sporadically within the classics over the course of the twentieth century. In 1912, Florence Mary Bennett's book, *Religious Cults Associated with the Amazons*, confidently asserted that the Amazons were survivors of a pre-Hellenic Grecian matriarchy, perhaps centred in Crete⁷⁸ and that they worshipped Cybele and Artemis, but also Ares, the god of war.⁷⁹ In 1931, J. H. Thiel found survivals of mother-right in Hittite law and Greek myth, and especially in myths surrounding Zeus and Hera.⁸⁰ George Thomson in 1949 and E. A. S. Butterworth in 1966 made similar arguments for the survivals of matriarchal culture and religion in classical Greece.⁸¹ Panagis Lekatsas

73 Ackerman 1989, 4.

74 Harrison 1903 (1955), 261–62; Gere 2009, 89.

75 Ackerman 2008, 143–44.

76 Rose 1911, 1926.

77 See, for example, Pembroke, 1967; Vidal-Nacquet 1981; Georgoudi 1992.

78 This was no doubt related to the claims of Sir Arthur Evans, excavator of Knossos, that the Minoans worshipped a great mother goddess. See Eller 2012.

79 Bennett 1912 (1967), 18, 73, 75.

80 Thiel 1931.

81 Thomson 1949; Butterworth 1966.

wrote an entire book defending matriarchal myth, crediting Bachofen for its inspiration.⁸² Most prominently, perhaps, Jacquetta Hawkes consistently championed the theory that the deeper strata of ancient Greece were matriarchal, noting in *Dawn of the Gods*, if the story of Zeus swallowing the pregnant Metis “can be taken to mean that the masculine Greek culture swallowed the feminine Minoan one, but that the resulting offspring possessed the normal share of her digested mother’s inheritance, then this is a fair rendering of what happened in the lands round the Aegean Sea between 2,500 and 3,500 years ago.”⁸³ Though Hawkes recognized that it is possible to honour the feminine principle while treating women badly, she remarks, “As for women themselves in the Greek world, and in Athens particularly, I believe those who say that their subservience has been greatly exaggerated through the bias of nineteenth-century scholarship.”⁸⁴

After Hawkes, the matriarchal thesis became even less mainstream in the classics. In the late twentieth century, as many second-wave feminists began to adopt matriarchal myth as their narrative of human history, female classicists (and anthropologists and archaeologists too) felt the need to simultaneously uphold the feminist cause and disabuse their more zealous contemporaries regarding the historicity of matriarchal myth. An early cautionary voice was that of Sarah B. Pomeroy, whose 1975 book *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* reminded readers of the lack of correlation between the gender of deities worshipped and the actual social status of people of those same genders.⁸⁵

Today, the question of a prehistoric matriarchy in the Mediterranean is mostly considered settled by classicists and anthropologists alike: there was no such thing. For a while though, a real synergy developed between anthropology and the classics, as anthropologists provided an enormous array of cultural beliefs and practices that classicists then used to shed light on both historical and prehistoric antiquity. This can be attributed in part to the ubiquity of a classical education in the late nineteenth century (at least as compared to today), but as we have seen, the attractiveness of matriarchal myth across many disciplines and social movements played a role as well.

82 Lekatsas 1977.

83 Hawkes 1968, 19.

84 Hawkes 1968, 285.

85 Pomeroy 1995, 15, 22–23. Originally published in 1975.

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Otis T. Mason and Hippocratic Environmental Theory at the Smithsonian Institution in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Rebecca Futo Kennedy

If you were to stroll through the ethnographic showcases at the Smithsonian or the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, the concept of progress there presented would appear remarkably modern.¹ Progress at the fair was defined through technology, and the ethnographic showcases were arranged to show how progression in inventiveness and technology was mirrored in the various “races of man.” From mud huts to the most advanced engines and construction techniques, race and progress were staged as going hand in hand.² The modern concept of scientific race was constructed in the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries.³ Although a modern construct, the races of man and their staging in the World’s Fairs and the Smithsonian owed a large debt to the ancient Greeks and Romans. This chapter explores the close connections between the ethnographic displays created under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institute at the direction of Otis T. Mason at the turn of the twentieth century and the ancient theory of human diversity referred to frequently as environmental determinism.

Otis Mason organized and maintained the ethnological materials collected and housed by the early Smithsonian Institution and created the system used for their display. He was also in charge of the official government ethnographic displays at two World’s Fairs. Mason was classically educated at Columbian University⁴ and upon graduation became principal and teacher at Columbian’s

¹ I want to thank Max L. Goldman for reading, discussion, and commenting on earlier drafts of this chapter. Thank you also to Emily Varto for her insightful comments and exemplary editorial work.

² For Chicago, see Rydell 1984, 38–71. The same connection was made in subsequent World’s Fairs, as well, as Rydell discusses. See further Rydell 1993.

³ It is a commonplace of scholarship on race in antiquity that the ancient Greeks and Romans had no understanding of a concept like the modern category of “race.” For discussion and bibliography, see Isaac 2004; 2006; Hannaford 1996; McCoskey 2012.

⁴ Now George Washington University.

Preparatory Department and later Professor of Anthropology. He was a founding member and early president of the Anthropological Association of Washington. Mason began collaborating with the Smithsonian to organize its ethnological materials as early as 1872, becoming Curator of Ethnology in 1884 and then serving as Head Curator of the new Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian from 1902 until his death in 1908. He was tasked with organizing the anthropological materials in the official government building displays at the Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia and the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Mason's education and scholarly background strongly suggest that the organizational principles for the "progress of the races"⁵ displays he developed, both at the fairs and in the Smithsonian's Department of Ethnology, were rooted in his interpretations of the classical theory of environmental determinism. He was also heavily influenced by classically trained founding figures of anthropology such as Gustav Friedrich Klemm, German anthropologist and author of the ten volume *Allgemeine Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit*, among others.⁶ Mason viewed the peoples and cultures he studied and exhibited as products of their environments, and he thought that a people's ability to manipulate their environment determined their level of civilization. Mason's understanding of the hierarchy of the races seems to have been informed by both Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871) and Brinton's *Races and Peoples* (1890), both of which he cites on several occasions. Brinton, a prominent American archaeologist and ethnologist, espoused the scientific racism popular at the time wherein some races were deemed less intellectually capable than others. Especially deficient, in Brinton's view, were the "black, brown, and red races."⁷

In this chapter, I look specifically at the ancient ideas that informed Mason's scholarship and practice, especially those expounded in the Hippocratic *Airs*,

5 On this concept, see Haller 1971; Stocking 1987, *passim*; Jones 1997, 40–55.

6 For the development of his theory of technogeography, see below. Mason also acknowledges the influence of Karl Ritter's *Die Erdkunde in Verhältnisse zur Natur und Geschichte des Menschen* (1822–1859), Arnold Guyot's *Earth and Man* (1865), and George Marsh's *Man and Nature* (1864). In his 1892 report on the progress of anthropology at the Smithsonian to Congress, Mason cites the completion of Ratzel's *Anthropogeographie* as offering evidence with which to update Guyot, Ritter, and Marsh (1892, 473). Marsh was a dedicated evolutionist. Ritter was not. Guyot seems to have accepted evolution through "natural causes" in his later years (Numbers 1998, 145). Mason was also quite an admirer of De Quatrefages, whose impressive osteological displays of the history of man he writes of in an 1890 report.

7 Brinton 1895. He also refers readers to De Quatrefages' *Histoire générale des races humaines* (1886–89).

Waters, Places. After a discussion of the primary components of the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places*, I turn to Mason's writings on technogeography and human invention and his principles of the display of ethnographic materials in museums. While Mason does not cite the *Airs* specifically in any of the works cited in this chapter, he makes repeated references to Hippocrates in his writings and is familiar with various Hippocratic texts. Moreover, there is a demonstrable presence and influence of *Airs, Waters, Places* in Mason's theories of progress.

The Ancient Environmental Theory of Human Diversity

Environmental determinism links human cultural, mental, and physical differences to the environment.⁸ While environmental determinism is not an idea limited to antiquity, it has its roots in Classical Greece, roots that date back at least to the medical writings of Hippocrates in the late fifth century BCE.⁹ It is neither a totalizing theory nor is it entirely cohesive. It has also changed over time as it has been adapted and manipulated to suit the needs and interests of different times and contexts. Its defining features from antiquity to the present, however, are a belief that the physical environment—geography, topography, and climate—shapes the cultures of different groups of peoples. In its most extreme forms, environmental determinism also emphasizes the impact of physical environment on the physical and moral characteristics of a people that make them distinctive from others. The *Airs, Waters, Places*, a fifth-century BCE text from the Hippocratic corpus, is the most extensive treatment of this idea from antiquity. The *Airs* seems to have been created as a guidebook for travelling physicians to aid them in their diagnoses as they encountered new peoples in new environments.¹⁰ It is divided into two halves: sections 1–11 examine the relationship between climate and geography and health, while sections 12–24 are ethnographic and link environments directly to the physical appearance and cultural practices of peoples primarily in the Black Sea

8 For a compact overview of the history of environmental determinism as an idea, see D. Livingstone 2011, 368–80.

9 Miller 1962 cites Democritus as the earliest environmental determinist.

10 See the introduction to Jouanna 1996 for discussion of the purpose and scope of the text. It is debated whether the text was actually written by Hippocrates or by someone working in the Hippocratic tradition.

region.¹¹ The Scythians, also found in Herodotus as a paradigmatic northern people, receive the bulk of the Hippocratic author's attention.

The author of *Airs* presents a schematic theory of environment and ethnicity.¹² In the early sections of the treatise, the author relies on observable phenomena to draw connections between health, disease, and water.¹³ In the second half, he discusses various northern tribes or peoples who were known only through rumour or who were represented contrary to how they appear in other contemporary representations or in the archaeological record. In this category are the Scythians and other peoples of the region around the Black Sea. Three key themes emerge in the discussion of the Scythians and other northern tribes, each of which became paramount in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century debates on evolution and the relationship of the races of mankind to environment: 1. the environment as determining factor in the creation of cultural and moral characteristics of a people, 2. the heritability of acquired characteristics, and 3. the use of technology to alter or overcome environmentally determined or hereditary deficiencies.

Environment as Determining Cultural and Moral Characteristics

According to the Hippocratic author, the impact of the environment is as follows: a temperate, warm, dry climate such as that in Asia Minor leads to gentler and more even-tempered peoples. Physically, they will be tall and uniform in build. People in such a climate will also be more subject to slavishness and pleasure seeking.¹⁴ Peoples who live in the north, like the Scythians, are made fierce and less tameable by the changeable climate. Because the climate moves between extremes of cold and hot and the topography of the land is varied, the physical appearance and character of the peoples who live in the north vary greatly: "The natures of some of them resemble wooded and well-watered mountains. The natures of others resemble airy, dry lands, or marshy meadows, or bare, dry plains."¹⁵ Also, variations in weather and landscape

11 The text seems to have originally treated peoples in both the north and south, using Libya and Egypt and the paradigms for southern peoples, but those sections were lost even before Galen's time.

12 See Calame 2005, 145–52, on the organizational scheme of the ethnographic portions of the treatise.

13 Jouanna (2012, 137–72) discusses the accuracy of the treatise's material on water and health. Also central to the assessment of health in the text is the location of a city relative to the cold/dry and hot/wet winds of south and north.

14 Hippoc. *Aer.* 12.

15 Hippoc. *Aer.* 13.4, expanded upon at Hippoc. *Aer.* 24. All translations are the author's own based on the Greek text in Jouanna 1996.

explain why “the physiques of Europeans show more variety than those of Asia and why their stature varies greatly even from city to city.”¹⁶ Peoples in Asia are less warlike and prone to live under a monarchy because the climate never changes; those peoples on the northern border of Europe and Asia, however, experience regular shocks to their “body and soul” as the weather and landscape change, thus making them more courageous, hot-tempered, and passionate.¹⁷ The opposite is true of stable climates: “Laziness is inherent in a uniform climate. Endurance of body and soul comes from change. Also, cowardice increases both from softness and laziness, while courage increases from endurance and work ethic.”¹⁸ These characteristics also make Europeans less responsive to monarchical governments and more independent.¹⁹ The Scythians are of particular interest to the author because they both conform to and, in some cases, deviate in the extreme from these general rules.

While in the text “Scythian” denotes the majority of the peoples (*genê*) of the Black Sea regions, they are divided into numerous tribes (*ethnê*),²⁰ who differ from each other based on their climate and landscape. For example, the Sauromatan *ethnos*, which resides on the shores of Lake Maiotis on the border between Europe and Asia, differs from all other Scythians and peoples of the world in being matriarchal and allowing women to participate in war.²¹ The Scythian *ethnos* of the steppe is nomadic, and its people dwell in wagons instead of houses and migrate from place to place in search of food. The wagons have four or six wheels and are drawn around by oxen. The women and children spend all their time in these wagons while the men spend all their time on horseback. Horses are such a central feature of nomadic life that these Scythians drink and eat cheese made from mare’s milk. This lifestyle is dictated by the so-called “Scythian desert,” a large “meadow-like plain devoid of trees

16 Hippoc. *Aer.* 23.2.

17 Hippoc. *Aer.* 16.

18 Hippoc. *Aer.* 23.3.

19 Hippoc. *Aer.* 23.4. Roman authors such as Pliny (*HN* 2.80), Vitruvius (*De arch.* 6.1.3), and Seneca (*De ira* 2.15) who adhere to the environmental view of character, classify the Germans much as Greek authors depict the southernmost of the Scythian tribes whose bodies undergo repeated shocks from the fluctuation of extreme temperatures and landscape.

20 The terms *genos* and *ethnos* are not used consistently in the ancient texts to denote what we might think of as an ethnic group or race or tribe. I am translating the terms as they are used by this particular author only and make no claims to their specific connotations in other authors.

21 Hippoc. *Aer.* 17.

and moderately wet.”²² The cultural differences between Scythian peoples are controlled mostly by the relationship of the people to the land. According to the treatise, physically, the Scythian Nomads are very uniform as an *ethnos* because of the shared climate; they are “afflicted by cold.”²³ The harshly cold and wet climate of the region lasts year-round, and so their summers and winters are the same. As a result:

They wear the same clothes, eat the same food, breathe the same damp air, drink from the same snow-and ice-melted water, and refrain uniformly from labour. It is well known that where there are no strong shifts in climate neither bodies nor souls can endure physical activity. By necessity, then, their bodies are stout, fleshy, jointless, bloated, and flabby, while their lower bellies are the most bloated bellies of all peoples. It is nearly impossible for a stomach to dry out in such a land with a nature and climate of this sort. And, because of their fatness and smooth fleshiness, the bodies of all, male and female, are identical to each other. Since the seasons are constant, their genetic materials undergo no decay or damage when they merge, except through trauma or disease.²⁴

The Scythians have red hair and red skin because the cold burns them instead of the sun—cold burn apparently makes one red. This effect of the cold contrasts with the commonplace in antiquity that Ethiopians and Indians were black-skinned because the sun had burned them. The direct impact of the environment on the Scythian Nomads is, however, unique for the text since, in this section, the author emphasizes peoples with extreme differences from Greeks and other peoples.²⁵ The author, however, also recognizes that environment is not the only factor in shaping physical and cultural differences, nor are environmentally determined factors unchangeable. Rather, as I discuss below, characteristics created through custom could become heritable and technology could be used to mitigate both environmentally determined and genetically determined characteristics.

Heritability of Acquired Characteristics

According to the Hippocratic author, customs could alter both environmentally determined physical and moral characteristics of a people. In

²² Hippoc. *Aer.* 18

²³ Hippoc. *Aer.* 18.1.

²⁴ Hippoc. *Aer.* 19.5.

²⁵ Hippoc. *Aer.* 14.1.

the case of physical changes, these could become heritable if the alteration through custom persisted over time as in the case of the Macrocephaloi. The Macrocephaloi apparently had round skulls, but because they found conical shaped heads more aesthetically pleasing, began to massage the heads of their infants until they achieve a conehead. The new shape then became a heritable characteristic: "whenever a child is born, immediately while the head is still pliant, they use their hands to reshape the head to make it longer and then apply bandages and other appropriate "shapers" to aid the process ... Custom worked in the beginning in such a way that it forced nature to follow suit."²⁶ It was only intermarriage with other tribes that eventually caused the cone-shape to diminish.

The greatest custom capable of altering the impact of environment, however, is law or government:

The laws of a people are also a factor since Europeans do not have kings like Asians. Wherever there are kings, by necessity there is excessive cowardice. I have said this before. It is because the souls are enslaved and refuse to encounter dangers on behalf of another's power and they willingly withdrawal. Autonomous men—those who encounter dangers for their own benefit—are ready and willing to enter the fray and themselves, not a master, enjoy the rewards of victory. Thus, laws are not insignificant for engendering courage.²⁷

The naturally occurring deficiencies of those who live in Asia's too-even climate, like the Greeks who lived along the coast of Asia Minor, therefore, could be mitigated if they were living under a democracy instead of under the Persian king. Here the author's environmental scheme shows the influence of the fifth and fourth century political and military conflicts between the Greeks and Persians: he must balance animosity against the Persians with the geographic realities of Greek colonization. This scheme allows for Greeks living in Asia Minor, and other non-monarchical *poleis*, to display increased courage that could become hereditary and make future generations resistant to the vices of monarchy.

²⁶ Hippoc. *Aer.* 14.3–4. The ancient notion of heredity expressed in this treatise makes clear the lack of a modern, scientific understanding as to what is and what is not a heritable quality. E.g.: "If, then, bald children come from bald parents and grey-eyed children from grey-eyed parents and deformed children from deformed parents, and so on, would it not be the case with other physical characteristics?" (Hippoc. *Aer.* 14.4).

²⁷ Hippoc. *Aer.* 23.4.

*Use of Technology to Overcome Environmentally
Determined or Hereditary Deficiencies*

The Scythian Sauromatai, the tribe dominated by women warriors who live along Lake Maeotis north of the Black Sea, used technology to alter natural appearance. The Sauromatai, according to Hippocrates' near-contemporary Herodotus, were descended from a wayward band of Amazons who merged with the young men of a local Scythian tribe.²⁸ This tradition seems to be reflected also in *Airs*, where the women are warriors while still unmarried and use a specially made bronze device attached to their right breast to cauterize it and prevent growth, allowing them to wield their weapons better.²⁹ This ancient mastectomy did not move from custom to nature as did the head-shaping of the Macrocephaloi. Instead, the Sauromatai needed to continually apply their technology to each generation to create the physical changes their customs required. Their technology was not used to overcome their environment and its impact, but their gender (sometimes difficult to distinguish from ethnicity in the ancient authors).³⁰ The Scythian Nomads, however, because of the harsh cold and wet they endured endlessly, had to use similar technologies to overcome the excessive bloating and the jointlessness the Hippocratic author claims must be caused by the climate.

All of our Greek images of ancient Scythians represent them as fit warriors who frequently ride horses and wield bows and javelins.³¹ This type of weaponry and association with horses is similar to their representation in *Airs*, but the knowledge of the impact those sorts of activities had on the Scythians and their physiques is lost on the author who assumes that the cold and wet climate would make them "by necessity" appear as "marvels of flab and fat."³² Instead of their taut strength being a product of strenuous physical activity, he imagines that the Scythian Nomads used cauterization (as the Sauromatan women did) to reduce the bloatedness in their shoulders, arms, breasts, hips,

28 Hdt. 4.110–117.

29 Hippoc. *Aer.* 17.3–4.

30 Hesiod is the first, though not the last, ancient author to posit that women were a race apart. For a discussion of this idea in classical Athens, see Loraux 1993. In numerous authors, such as Aristotle (e.g., *Politics* 1252a–1255), effeminacy was also an indication of "otherness" and was especially associated with the Persians, whose submission to kingship made them "soft." For discussion of this wide-ranging phenomenon in ancient Greek thought, see Sassi 2001, 82–139, esp.

31 On images of Scythians in Greek sources, see Ivanchik 2005. Images of Amazons and Persians are very similar to those of Scythians.

32 Hippoc. *Aer.* 20.

and loins. The evidence of this cauterization, according to *Airs*, is “obvious” when one looks at a Scythian and sees that he is not fat. By cauterizing themselves, they were enabled to draw their bows and hurl their javelins and, most importantly, ride a horse. Ironically, the author assumes that sitting on a horse led to increased obesity, although a life on horseback likely precluded such lack of fitness. He also cites their constant migrations in wagons and on horseback as a reason for why no one among the Scythians ever walks, which would, in his opinion, have helped with their extreme obesity. The Scythian Nomads, then, are bound by their environment to live as nomads and being nomads requires them to ride horses and wagons, thus making them lazy. The cold and wet of the climate further makes its mark on their bodies by bloating them to the point of appearing jointless and round. To enable their bodies to fit on horseback, they must develop technologies that can render their bodies fit enough to do so.³³

The author singles out the Scythian Nomads as an anomalous people because they differ greatly from Greeks and other northern peoples. Their climate was consistently cold and wet, and their lifestyle was adapted to living on the open steppe. Most other Scythians, as Europeans and not Asians, fit in with the more general scheme of the Hippocratic theory. The author does not discuss these European peoples because he considers them similar to the Greeks. The implication, therefore, is a type of hierarchy or, at least, ranking, of sameness or difference.³⁴ Laws and customs themselves are only occasionally attributed directly to the environment, but they nonetheless were considered distinctive between Europe and Asia. This impact of climate would have an immense and continuing impact on the way human diversity and the concept of race developed from antiquity to the modern period. Its impact culminated in the nineteenth century when environmental determinism merged with the idea of the “progress of races” that brought the physical sciences, social sciences, and government policy into convergence at the Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum and Museum of Natural History.

33 Scythian women do not ride horses and remain in the wagons for their entire lives, according to the author, and are therefore excessively fat to the point where they cannot be impregnated; the excessive fat prevents the passage of semen into the womb (Hippoc. *Aer.* 20).

34 This hierarchy is made explicit in the Roman authors who considered the temperate zone where Rome was located to be the best climate to produce the best peoples.

The Importance of Environmental Determinism in Early Anthropology and Physical Sciences

The Hippocratic *Airs* had a profound impact on the history of medicine as well as on the long history of thinking about and attempting to define race and ethnicity. The authority the text wielded as part of the Hippocratic corpus was only further reinforced by Galen's decision to write an extensive commentary on it, thus ensuring its transmission as a central text of both ancient medical corporuses. And transmitted it was: references to *Airs* appear throughout the medieval and early modern period in European, Jewish, and Arab medical sources.³⁵ The text maintained its prominence in the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries in both Europe and the United States. With Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), the ancient connection between environment and ethnicity entered more securely into the debates on the developing construct of race. Montesquieu explicitly linked climate and geography to the development of a peoples' "spirit." It was not just their physical and cultural differences that were impacted by environment, but their innate morality and group character as well.³⁶

From the Enlightenment forward, the evidence for the *Airs*' influence is plentiful. It is regularly quoted by medical doctors discussing "iatrometeorology," ethnoclimatology, and tropicalism.³⁷ The link between climate and race developed clearly within the framework of European colonialism in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Latin America, and the Caribbean as doctors,

35 For a general overview of the history of the reception of the *Airs* and related ideas from antiquity to the eighteenth century, see Glacken 1990 [1967]. On Jewish and early modern European reception specifically, see Kennedy and Jones-Lewis 2016, chap. 6 and 7.

36 There is ample evidence of the *Airs* theory's importance to Enlightenment thought. It occurs in the writings not only of Montesquieu but also Buffon, Kant, Blumenbach, Cuvier, and in the great *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*. Even Linneaus seems to have adhered to the Hippocratic categories, though with more refinement concerning skin colours, for which the Greeks had a limited vocabulary. Voltaire rejected environmental determinism in favour of a polygenesist view of race in his *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des Nations* (1756), while Hume preferred moral causation for the hierarchy of peoples. For a selection of readings from these authors, see Eze 1997.

37 E.g., Haviland 1853 and 1854 on iatrometeorology, and Hunt 1863 and Sambon 1898 on ethnoclimatology and acclimatization. On tropicalism and its long history in the history of medicine, see Livingstone 1999; 2002; Osborne 2000. For a brief discussion of the reception of *Airs* in the medical fields, see Miller 1962.

government officials, and military leaders combated the onset of previously unknown diseases among colonial troops, missionaries, and civil servants. Accordingly, in the developing fields of geography and ethnology, the impact of geography, topography, and climate became a central feature of understanding the native populations of the colonized regions.

In the nineteenth century, the *Airs* seems to represent the Hippocratic corpus for American college students, appearing on reading lists for curricula at numerous universities, including Columbia and Harvard.³⁸ Furthermore, scientific works often cited the text's theory (if not the text itself), the truth and value of which was assumed among late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scientists, medical professionals, and social scientists.³⁹ In the United States, in particular, the advent of Darwinian evolutionary theory did not eradicate environmental determinism as a cause for human origins and development in debates. Rather, environmental determinism was used to make Darwinian evolution palatable to many. It allowed Christian scientists to maintain a strong belief in the monogenesis of humanity in the face of the more racist, polygenetic idea that the "races of man" had developed from different origins.⁴⁰ According to the monogenesists, there was one origin of man; differences in physical features, cultural practices, and moral character were a product of environment.⁴¹ Environmental determinism also allowed scientists and social scientists to mitigate the randomness of natural selection that Darwinian evolution implied. Moreover, through a neo-Lamarckian version of the heredity of acquired characteristics (most evident in the Macrocephaloi of *Airs*), they could allow for rapid changes to humanity that might only take a few generations instead of millennia to manifest.⁴² Mason repeatedly stated in

38 This title alone from the Hippocratic corpus appears in numerous reading lists and "Great Books" lists for colleges and universities from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

39 See especially Livingstone 2012 and Rosenberg 2012.

40 On the way Darwinian evolution was adapted and adopted among Christian academics in the United States especially, see Numbers 1998. Nott and Gliddon 1854 exemplifies the polygenist rejection of environmental determinism. See also now Keel 2018 on monogenesis, evolution, environmental determinism and race in the nineteenth through early twentieth centuries.

41 See Livingstone 2008 for extensive discussion. The Lamarckian concept of heritability of acquired characteristics allowed such environmental adaptations to become genetic. Herbert Spencer supported a theory, Lamarckian in premise, that natural law dictated a beginning in monoform and an evolution toward diversity. See Hinsley 1981, chap. 5, on Spencer's influence on American anthropology.

42 In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the theory has not lost its potency, especially among evolutionary biologists and geographers. See Livingstone 2011 for current bibliography. See also Bashford and Tracy 2012 for the history of *Airs* in the history of medicine.

his writings a belief in the unity of humankind and lists Lamarck and Darwin as those who proved it.⁴³

Mason's education, like that of many of the most well-known and respected ethnologists, geologists, and geographers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was grounded in the classics and the Enlightenment philosophers' reception of it. Mason himself studied at Columbian University in Washington DC following the standard classical curriculum of the day.⁴⁴ For admission, the student was expected to have completed not only a course of study in both Greek and Roman grammar, but to also have completed specific readers in both languages and demonstrate competency in translating Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Caesar's *Commentaries*, selected orations of *Cicero*, and Virgil.⁴⁵ Once accepted, students for the Bachelor of Arts took two years of required courses in Greek and Latin. Students could then elect to specialize and continue the study of Greek and Latin authors into their junior and senior years. The study of Greek and Latin was accompanied by a required year of ancient history and geography. Mason elected to specialize in the ancient languages and seems to have been most interested in Mediterranean cultures and their innovations.⁴⁶

When he graduated in 1861, he became the principal and head instructor at the Columbian University Preparatory School, where he engaged his students in a similar classical curriculum. He continued his studies in the ancient Mediterranean and received a Master's in 1862 with a focus on the eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁷ It was only in 1872, when asked to assist in organizing the Smithsonian's growing collection of indigenous ethnological artefacts, that

43 In "The Birth of Invention" (1892), he writes that they proved not only the "consanguinity" of humankind, but of all living beings (1892, 604).

44 The following comes from the 1860 Course Catalogue for Columbian University, provided by George Washington University Archives and Reference Specialist, Sylvia Augustejin. Information on Mason's degrees and their dates was also provided by the Archives. Student transcripts were not kept in that period.

45 Specifically for readers, Jacob's or Felton's Greek and Latin readers contained selected readings in poetry and prose.

46 His assistant at the Smithsonian, Walter Hough (1908), wrote in an obituary of Mason, "His early education was begun at a period when the culture side of study was its chief charm and utility; classical studies preponderated, and he fell under the sway of the literary spirit of the period" (1908, 664).

47 He was given an honorary PhD in 1879, which was not in a subject. He was listed as Professor of Anthropology at last in the 1884 catalogue, but it is unclear if he ever taught any courses on the subject as none were listed in the course catalogues up to that point. On Mason's career at the Smithsonian, see Hinsley 1981, 83–123.

he began to turn his attention seriously to the Americas.⁴⁸ With this turn, Mason put classical theories of human diversity to work in the service of nineteenth-century scientific racism under the guise of “culture history” and the “progress of civilizations.”

Mason's Theories of Culture History and Human Invention

The classical foundations of Mason's education are evident in his early work in the ancient Mediterranean, although none of the authors from the scientific corpus, including Hippocrates and Aristotle, were required reading in his ancient languages courses.⁴⁹ It is clear from the frequent references to Aristotle especially, however, that he read many of the ancient scientific texts, including Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, and Aristotle among others. In fact, to Mason, the world he studied as a professional anthropologist was still the Greek *oikoumenê*, a term he repeatedly uses in his writing to describe the globe. For Mason, this *oikoumenê* was a place in which man and environment were one and lived in a symbiotic, but contentious relationship with each another. It was this relationship between man and environment that defined a peoples', or race's, culture and that situated them on the path of progress toward civilization.

In 1894, Otis Mason gave the Presidential address to the Anthropological Association of Washington. The speech was titled “Technogeography or the Relationship of the Earth to the Industries of Mankind.”⁵⁰ Both here and in his 1895 report to Congress, Mason indicates the clear influence of the *Airs*. Central to both Mason's theory of environmental influence on invention and his museum displays was the idea of the “culture area.” He defines culture areas as follows:

The most cursory glance reveals the fact that there are certain well established worlds within this world. This earth, which appears to be an

48 Hough (1908, 661–62) notes the importance that Mason himself placed on the decision to turn to North America based on the ample amounts of unstudied materials ready at hand. In his last years, he turned again away from North America to the east Asia.

49 In fact, Mason was at the Smithsonian to examine some ancient Near Eastern inscriptions on the day he was first asked to turn to indigenous studies.

50 Mason 1894, 137–61. In addition to publications on the influence of material environment on culture, Mason published extensively on North American basketwork and on the value of the study of anthropology all while organizing and curating the scattered and ever-growing ethnology collections at the National Museum, estimated to have contained almost a half million items when he began cataloguing them in 1872. Hough 1908 gives a substantial list of his publications.

oblate spheroid, all parts of which are approachable from the rest and their functions almost interchangeable one with another, is made up of great isolated parts or patches, which may be denominated culture or inventional areas, *oikoumenai* of Aristotle. Each one of the areas has a climate of its own, waters and lands of its own, plants and minerals and animals; indeed, a physiography of its own; so that when a group of human beings have, in the fortunes of existence, found themselves in one of these spaces they have been irresistibly developed into a culture and trades and industries of their own. This was the centrifugal stage or the evolution of industries. It was just as though they had cut themselves off from the rest of their species and gone to inhabit another world.⁵¹

The culture areas were defined for Mason primarily by their climate, topography, and geography: "Solar heat, moisture, terrestrial forms and movements horizontally and vertically cooperated in each area to stamp upon it the type of its life." Just as in Hippocratic and other ancient versions of environmental theory (like those found in Pliny and Vitruvius), it is temperature, moisture, landscape, and, importantly, latitude and longitude that create the culture of a people. The Hippocratic *Airs* further considers the combinations of climate, seasonal change, and topography as responsible for ethnic and cultural developments.⁵² Where the land and climate are continually either hot or cold, the human body and the cultures of those who live there are unbalanced. Where the seasons change and contain a proper mixture of hot and cold, wet and dry (temperate zones), cultures develop appropriately (that is, similar to Greeks). Mason's technogeographic scheme is dependent on the same principles. There are "areas of discouragement, too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, too elevated, malarious, infested with noxious insects or beasts, too thickly forested." These areas discourage the development of primitive cultures, but could, once a civilization from elsewhere progressed to the enlightened stage, "become centres of greatest activity" for them.⁵³

After areas of discouragement, what the ancients might refer to as "the edges of the world," come the "areas of monotony." Regions such as the arctic and the equatorial countries both occupied this position for Mason:

Those lands in which men occupied a homogenous environment were like the sea, and the people were little differentiated. The arctic

⁵¹ Mason 1894, 149.

⁵² Mason equates culture areas with ethnic areas as well as with what he refers to as technic areas (1894, 150).

⁵³ Mason 1894, 149.

regions in their marine mammals and semi-aquatic men furnish a good example of this class. But in the equatorial regions of the globe there occurs much of the monotony of environment which characterizes the circumpolar region. In the latter man exhausts himself in his efforts for subsistence; in the former he does not develop because nature supplies his few wants and at the same time overwhelms the work of his hands.⁵⁴

Mason also differentiates regions with “two elements, elevations, two seasons” and “areas of many elements, with variety of climate, scenery, sources of material supply, and means of communication, stimulating the appropriation of nature’s largess.” These regions, of course, allowed for their peoples to evolve and progress most rapidly to the stage of civilization.⁵⁵ Those peoples who lived in culture areas that were not properly varied remained confined to savagery or barbarism. Who are these savages and barbarians and enlightened peoples? In the nineteenth century, there were (Mason quoting Klemm) the “Negro and anthropophagous New-Zealander, contemporary with the skilful Chinese, the cultivated Japanese, and thoughtful German.” The first two peoples occupy the position of savagery, the second two of barbarians, the last of enlightened. These peoples are contrasted with those of antiquity: “the wandering Scythians, the Sarmatian savages”⁵⁶ who lived side by side with the civilized Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.⁵⁷ While Mason does not explicitly attribute moral characteristics like slavishness or laziness to those ethnic groups residing in certain culture areas, by placing them on Klemm’s scale of progress, he reinforces the Hippocratic associations of political development from monarchy to autonomous systems with temperate climates as well as the similar equation of nomadism or matriarchy with inferior cultures (as opposed to the settled *poleis* of Greece).

54 Mason 1894, 150. Australia, however, he remarks, has all conditions unfavourable to humans exaggerated and is the worst of all possible places to develop.

55 Mason expands into more specific details on the development of industry and its relationship to environment in his 1895 annual report to Congress concerning the various culture regions in North America.

56 The Sarmatians are the *Airs’* Sauromatai.

57 Mason 1874, 395.

Environment Determines Mankind

Mason's theory of culture areas and man's path "ever onward and upward" was rooted in Gustav Klemm's idea of *Kulturgeschichte*; Mason presented Klemm's organizational principles for ethnological collections in the Smithsonian Annual Report of 1874.⁵⁸ Klemm charted a trajectory for humans that defined their culture on a scale from savagery to barbarism to enlightened/free/civilized (Table 5.1). Mason took this scale as the measure of the progress of man towards its *telos* in nineteenth-century America and northern Europe and mapped it onto his conception of how inventions could be used to measure man's progress in their relationship with their environment. In the 1874 report to Congress, Mason begins by situating the modern study of man within the framework of the ancient sciences. While adhering to a view that all of mankind was a unity, he viewed the races within mankind as a product of evolutionary change that resulted from environmental factors and the ability of man to overcome the environment. It is not clear whether he understood physical features, like hair and skin colour and skull size,⁵⁹ to be environmentally determined, but given that these were considered by Mason to be race markers and that he understood Darwinian and Lamarckian evolution and natural selection as being related to environment, it is likely that he viewed them as an evolutionary consequence of geography. Mason remarks of environment, "We find man bound up with his material surroundings by a threefold coil: he resembles it; he depends upon it; he subdues it."⁶⁰ Of resemblance, he states, "Man resembles all creatures in his amenability to the laws of climate and physical forces." Whether this means that he believed that in the earliest phases of evolution climate shaped humans physically is unclear. It does hint towards it and would fit properly with the type of resemblance that the ancient environmentalists suggested with skin colour and stature reflecting a region's climate and topography. The initial phase, then, of man's progress towards civilization consisted of the environment shaping man to resemble it.

58 Mason 1874, 390–410. The report is made up of a translation of the new Leipsic Museum's "Extra-Beilage zu No. 104 der wissenschaftlichen Beilage der Leipziger Zeitung" and Mason's assessment of its content and reasons for including it in the annual report.

59 Mason 1882, 32. Mason viewed skin colour and hair type as superficial markers of race, but as essential. Osteology, however, was more certain—skull shape, posture, and facial angles being key elements (Mason 1874, 391–92).

60 Mason 1873, 393. This text includes one of the rare direct references to Hippocrates by Mason (1873, 391).

TABLE 5.1 "How the progress and adaptations of culture in the various categories may have taken place" using the seven periods as defined by Henry Lewis Morgan. Reproduced from Mason 1895

Categories	Grades of culture						
Morgan's scheme	Lower Savage.	Middle Savage	Upper Savage.	Lower Barbarous.	Middle Barbarous.	Upper Barbarous.	Civilized.
Characteristics	No fire, rude stone.	Fish diet, fire.	Invention of the bow.	The art of pottery.	Domestication, cereals.	Smelting, writing.	Printing.
Race	St. Acheul.	Australians.	Nomadic Indians.	Iroquois, Muskoki.	Zuffeis, Aztecs.	Semitic Races.	Later Aryan.
Food	Raw products of the earth.	Indigenous products, roasted and stoneboiled food.	Dried meats and plants, dug-out vessels for cooking.	Food partly raised corn, beans, &c. Drinks. Food boiled.	Tortillas, gruels, cacao, chile, intoxicants.	Porridge, milk, decoctions, leaven, metal dishes, fruit trees raised.	Every variety, animal and vegetable.
Clothing	None, or a wind shield.	Capes of skin or coarse matting.	Caps, body clothes, moccasins, of the sexes much alike.	Shirt, apron, robe, leggings, moccasins, head-dress.	Varied with rank, highly ornamented, shoes.	Of cotton, linen, and woollen stuffs, varied with rank and occasion.	Differentiated for sex, rank, and occasion.

Categories		Grades of culture					
Habitations	Caves and shelters.	Temporary huts and wind-breaks.	Tents and wigwams in clan-groups.	Long-houses and permanent villages.	Stone, adobe, lime, fiat roofs, public buildings, no arch.	Sun-dried bricks, stone, wood, less communal, shops, arches, streets.	Strictly family, exceedingly varied, gas, water pipes.
Implements	Palaeolithic.	Charred spears, hammers, knives, nets, dug-outs, fire-drills.	Skin-dressing, basketweaving, bow-dressing.	Polished-stone, mortars, wood-working, pottery.	Digging-stick, clay working tools, mule trappings.	Herding, weaving, meal, and farming, rude handicraft.	Stimulation of invention by protection and patent laws.
Weapons	Clubs and stones.	spears, clubs, boomerangs, throw-sticks, shields.	Bows and arrows in great variety, scalping knives.	Bow, club, tomahawk, scalping-knife, of better make.	Obsidian ax, spear, obsidian knife, darts, slings, shields.	Flint-locks, wall and moat, sword and lance.	Fire arms perfected, iron clads, signal service, &c.
Locomotion	No appliances.	Trails and landmarks.	Snow-shoes, sledges, dug-outs, rafts, and skinboats.	Canoes, litters, carrying places.	Canals, roads, causeways, bridges, llamas, and, later, mules and horses.	Beasts of burden, floats, open ships, camel trails.	Steam carriage added.

TABLE 5.1 "How the progress and adaptations of culture in the various categories may have taken place" using the seven periods (cont.)

Categories	Grades of culture					
	Painted	Feathers and	Tattoo	Paint and	Paint and toggery,	Jewelry and
Aesthetic Products	bodies, strings of shells, whistles and wooden drums.	paint, gorgets and limb trappings, stick and skin drums.	and paint, embroidery and fringes, rattles and bells.	pendants, textile, stone, shell and feathers, flute of 10 notes, drums, rattles.	carving in stone and wood, embroidery, drums, shell-horns, flutes.	scents, massive structures, music varied, poetry painting, bel elletres.
Domestication	None.	The dog.	Dogs, ponies, deer. In the south, birds.	Same as last. No others to domesticate.	Deer, rabbits, fish, many birds, cochineal.	Camel, cow, horse, dog, sheep, goat, poultry.
Industries	Hunting and fishing.	Supplying wants, little division or barter.	Hunting, fishing, gathering, barter, wampum.	Taking from nature, raising crops, making utensils, exchange.	Weaving, felting, dyeing, stamping, ceramics, stone cutting.	Metallurgy, caravan and ship trade, markets, fairs. Commerce.
Language	Interjectional and by signs.	Guttural, clicking, reduplicative.	Agglutinative, prone to dialectic change.	More and softer sounds, holophrasms longer, wood and rock carvings.	Forty sounds, polysynthetisms euphonic, symbolic writing.	Highly inflectional, writing syllabic or alphabetic, literature.
						Inflected, writing, printing, telegraph.

Categories		Grades of culture				
Knowledge	The habits of game, a little about the stars and the weather.	Count four; predict weather, judge locality and distance, name species.	Decimal notation, time, genera of objects, natural phenomena.	Count 100, wampum in historic narration, the stars, use of medicine.	Vigesimal counting, calendar, natural history, medicine, history, law, maps	Astronomy, geography, medicine, history, technology, politics.
Beliefs	Everything animated.	Ghosts, hero ancestors, animal soul in things.	Sorcery, future life like this, good and evil powers, myths.	Dreams, wandering ghosts, Great and Evil Spirit, minor deities and heroes.	Superstitions, three fold avernus,element worship, seven great gods.	Monotheistic or polytheistic anthropomorphism.
Worship	Appeasing everything.	Sorcery, rain-making, fetish worship.	Medicine pow-wow, invocation by smoke, fasting, mutilation.	Religious order separate, offerings, festivals, dances, nature worship.	Priestly caste, pantheon, human sacrifices, oaths, vows, fasts, penances.	Sacred books, preaching, prayer, fasting, alms, chants.
						Public and private. The spirit above the form.

TABLE 5.1 "How the progress and adaptations of culture in the various categories may have taken place" using the seven periods (cont.)

Categories	Grades of culture						
Morals	Conformity to clan use. No code.	Conjugal and parental duties not enforced, hospitable, improvident.	Chastity of wives enforced, generous, cruel.	Labor degrading to men, dignified, kind to aged and children, cruel.	Submissive, unchaste and drunkards punished, true, kind, chivalrous.	Temperate, lewd, polite, hospitable, shrewd, brave, treacherous.	To love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.
Social Structure	Promiscuity.	Punaluan marriage in groups.	Ganowanian marriage, mother-right, clan-system.	The same, father-right begins, and personal property.	The same, father-right, property more individualized.	Patriarchal family, polygamy, property in severalty, despotism.	Monogamic family, father-right, Free State.
Social Rites	Not known.	Greetings formal, tabu, deposit burial.	Marriage rite weak, Potlatch feasts, burial various.	Marriage by presents, ball games, ossuaries.	Marriage elaborate, games, ceremoniousness, attendants killed at the grave.	Harems, games, bathing, burial near shrines.	Marriage by priest, survivals of ceremony, burial in graves and tombs.

SOURCE: REPLICATED FROM MASON'S TABLE (1882, 38–39)

Mankind Dependent on Environment

The second phase was man's dependence upon the environment. This phase is where invention begins to emerge and where civilization itself first manifests. Of dependence and its consequences, Mason writes:

The dependencies of man are twofold—those which he has in common with other creatures, and those by which climate, food, the fertility of the soil, the constancy and suitableness of material supplies, confine him, determine his character and destiny; by which the poverty of some places starves him, the luxuriance of others enervates him, the adaptability of others to his body and mind supplies just those helps, stimulants, and rewards which conduce his symmetrical development.⁶¹

In this phase of dependency, in which climate, available food sources, and resources limit a people and define their character as well as the trajectory of their civilization, we see the first hints of true Hippocratic environmental determinism. The three examples of places Mason gives can easily map onto the topographical and moral map created, albeit in muddled fashion, in *Airs*. The desert, be it a desert of sand and heat or one of cold like the Scythian steppe, starves, while the land of plenty that is Persia or Egypt corrupts and saps the strength of men, leaving them prone to slavishness. Only the temperate places (the adaptable), those that provide a proper balance of hot/cold, wet/dry, allow for man in balance. "Symmetrical development" reveals echoes of humoral balance. Humanity, Mason continues, is a most helpless and needy creature, in this phase. Only if a people could advance to the final phase as subduers of their environment could they be civilized.

*Mankind Determines Environment*⁶²

Mason worked from the premise that environment broadly defined—climate, topography, geography, material resources—shaped human cultures, and from

⁶¹ Mason 1874, 393.

⁶² This portion of Mason's theory seems to be under the heavy influence of Roman technical writers like Vitruvius and Frontinus. Vitruvius especially seems to embrace the equation of advanced technologies with civilization. His discussion of the "progress" of technology and civilization would have read quite familiar to Mason: "People, in the old way, were born like wild beasts in the forests, caverns, and woods, filling themselves with what grew uncultivated, and thus they passed their lives. Meanwhile it happened at a particular spot that a thick grove of trees, by storms and gales repeatedly tossed, the friction between their branches sparked a fire. Terrified [in their ignorance] by the blaze raging, those who were in the vicinity of the spot fled. [Nonetheless, recognizing the benefits of fire, they

the premise that man's relationship to that environment shaped the character not only of individuals but of entire peoples. As a people progressed, however, it could use their environmental resources through invention to achieve enlightened, civilized, and free status. Just as with the Hippocratic *Airs*, where the use of technology could turn bloated and inhuman Scythians or women into warriors, for Mason technology meant moving beyond using nature to satisfy human needs and progressing to a life of artifice, where every human want could be met in spite of nature. The ancient theories of Hippocrates translated easily for Mason to contemporary race science and hierarchies of peoples by positing the industrial revolution and the consequent exploitation of environment it entailed as the ultimate evidence of human progress:

The right progress looks forward to a time when the whole earth will have been exploited, every pernicious plant and animal and man or tribe been removed, and all that is good domesticated; when the powers of nature will be harnessed or enslaved; when distance and time will offer no impediment to commerce; when it will be easy to put production and consumption in friendly union at the springing up of desire as it was for primitive man or woman.⁶³

soon learned to master it and communities began to develop] and many people came together to associate in one place, uniquely rewarded by nature with the ability to walk erect rather than head-down, and so to gaze meaningfully upon the magnificence of the world and the stars, and also in their ease in manipulating whatever object they wished with their hands and jointed fingers. Some then began in this community to construct shelters with leaves, others to tunnel into hills; some, imitating the nests of swallows in their structures, deployed mud and twigs. Then observing the shelters of others and adding new elements to their thinking, day by day they constructed better kinds of houses. Since men were imitative and instructable by nature, daily they displayed to all their various achievements in building; thus while glorying in their inventions, and exercising their talents in their rivalries every day, they became more accomplished in their judgment. And so at first with upright forked supports, interspersed twigs, and mud, they wove their walls. Others constructed walls by drying moistened clods, joining them with timber, and to escape the rain and heat they covered them with reeds and foliage. After that, when these roofs could not withstand the winter season's rains, making ridges with clay covering the slopes, they drew off the rainwater" Vitruvius' *De arch.* 2.1, 2–3 (trans. Spencer 2016, 181). On Vitruvius' environmental technology, see Spencer 2016.

63 Mason 1894, 161. This is made even clearer in Mason 1895, a government report that makes evident the connection between government support for the development of anthropology as a field and government policy towards indigenous peoples and westward expansion in the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

Those pernicious tribes, those savage peoples who could not properly exploit the resources of their environment to progress because their very environments confined them and trapped them in their primitive state, would simply need to be removed so that the civilized could continue “upward and onward” towards the perfection of artificial life.⁶⁴

Mason aimed to support this view in his museum and fair displays. His earlier displays were not chronological, but were organized by inventions. A primitive culture could live side by side with an enlightened one, the difference being that the former had been stunted by their environment, while the latter had developed in a better environment and learned to subdue others’ environments, too. This uneven chronology of technological development was presented to museum visitors as fact. The early displays of the 1880s showed primarily indigenous artefacts arranged using a system developed by Mason, which traced a single technology from primitive type to most advanced. These displays, however, were atemporal: They were grouped by material and region, but not necessarily by tribe.⁶⁵ The reasons for this arrangement were, in part, practical. As Mason wrote in response to criticisms of his display principles by Franz Boas in 1887, it was not possible in many instances to identify the tribe to which an artefact belonged given the lack of clear documentation from its collection. Further, Mason reasoned that the artefact itself was bound not necessarily to a specific tribe but to a culture area more broadly. Any resemblance of artefacts from tribe to tribe within a technic or cultural region was a result of like environmental circumstances or cultural sharing.⁶⁶ For Mason,

64 Mason 1894, 156–61. Because of the uneven chronology of development, technic and ethnic progress came into conflict, according to Mason. Thus removal (extinguishing or driving them “to the suburbs”) of “non-progressive peoples” is required.

65 A complaint concerning Smithsonian displays well into the 1980s, especially concerning African displays. The arrangement of ethnological materials suggested that the “primitive” cultures of Africa and the American west were the contemporary cultures of those locations, as if they had been frozen in time and were never changing. On African displays specifically, see, for example, Arnoldi 1999.

66 See Mason 1887 responding to Boas 1887. The discussion was finally ended with the response of Powell 1887 to Boas’ complaints. Interestingly, Boas realized that some of his own ideas about museum display were untenable for a variety of reasons, especially in museums focused on generalized public education and not scholarly study, during his years as a museum assistant curator (Jacknis 1988). Mason’s own principles of display for both the museums and fairs were also heavily influenced by his tour of European museums and the Paris World Expo of 1889. See Kohlstedt 2008. Mason published his observations on the expo in 1890. On general trends in anthropology museum display in this period, see Jenkins 1994.

there was little difference, racially speaking, from artefact to artefact, except how advanced the technology represented was. Within the framework of the progress of races, the ability to subdue nature was considered severely limited among such aboriginal peoples; therefore, the best display methods allowed comparison within the culture region, not between tribes.

This original organizing principle, dictated strictly by materials and environment, was used for displays both within the U.S. National Museum and at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Fair. By 1883, however, Mason had shifted slightly to arranging artefacts by culture areas, thanks to the publication of a language map of indigenous peoples by the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE). Mason used the map to define culture areas, which were designated not by tribal identities but by language groups. Mason's decision to use the BAE's map allowed for a happy marriage of his ideas of race hierarchies, industrial progress, and environmental determinism in both the new displays at the museum and the Chicago World's Fair.

According to Hinsley, the Chicago fair was the pivotal moment for Mason and the Smithsonian.⁶⁷ By shifting focus explicitly from artefact evolution onto the culture regions, Mason was able to encompass more broadly and definitively his theories concerning the impact of environment on human progress. With the assistance of William Holmes, Mason turned his culture areas into life-group displays that set contemporary indigenous peoples into "pristine pre-Columbian surroundings" that thereby suspended them in time as savages who could only resemble and depend upon their environment and not subdue it.⁶⁸ Juxtaposed both at the fair and in the museum with the industrial technologies of white Americans of European descent that exploited the vast material resources of the continent, the elimination of these "lesser" peoples was justified, if not required, for "right progress" to continue. The organization of anthropology displays at the Fair in general, in addition to Mason's own in the Government Building, further emphasized the idea that lower, savage cultures could not and should not survive the century.⁶⁹

67 Hinsley 1981, 111–12.

68 Hinsley 1981, 109. Hinsley remarks that it would be unwise to assume that the adoption of the life group by Mason was influenced by Boas or that Boas and Mason agreed even in 1895 on basic principles of display for ethnological materials.

69 Rydell 1984, 38–71.

Conclusion

Although Boas is now considered a father of American anthropology, Otis Mason was a pioneer in applying theories of environmental determinism, both in the analysis of human cultures and in the display of their artefacts. Mason's theories about how environment shaped these cultures and how engagement with the environment decided a people's level of progress from savage to civilized was heavily influenced by his classical education and, especially, by the ideas on climate, topography, and geography as the key influence on human diversity found in the Hippocratic corpus' *Airs, Waters, Places*. Environmental determinism has continued to exert its siren's call on anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, and the media. Debates on climate change are steeped in Mason's language and books like Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* would appear to him as common sense. Because of pioneers in early anthropology like Otis Mason, these ideas still have pull in modern anthropology and museum displays, even if the audience and scholars no longer realize that the Hippocratic school and the ancient Greeks undergird them.

Mason's work on indigenous cultures reveals both his classical education and his early investment in European theories of the evolution of mankind. When he developed the classification systems for his museum and fair displays, he used classical theories of environmental determinism, which he combined with the then prominent theories of the progress of the races of mankind, to create ethnographic exhibits that promoted a "proper interpretation of social and political reality."⁷⁰ These exhibits organized the races—indigenous peoples in particular—on a spectrum from savage to barbarian to enlightened, civilized, and free that reflected his fusion of modern ideas of race progress with ancient environmental determinism. This fusion informed his core theoretical idea of the "culture area" which linked technological and cultural development to the availability of resources and climate. A people who had not progressed from the stage of dependence on their environment were considered, like Brinton's "black, brown, and red" peoples, "lower" culture groups. Mason's theories and their manifestation in museum displays allowed for and even encouraged the systematic eradication of these "lesser" races, something he considered not only inevitable, but necessary for the continued progress of the "higher" races.

⁷⁰ Rydell 1984, 3.

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PART 2

*Classics and the Science of Man: Customs,
Religions, and Beliefs*



The Feast and Commensal Politics: Ancient Greek Prefigurations of Anthropological Concerns

Kevin Solez

The science of the manners and customs of different peoples has some quality so useful and interesting that Homer thought that he ought to make it the subject of an entire poem. Its aim is to set forth the wisdom of Ulysses, his hero, who, after the siege of Troy, seeing himself incessantly kept by Neptune's wrath at a distance from Ithaca, his fatherland, profited by the different errors in navigation to instruct himself about the customs of the nations where the angered winds forced him to land, and to take from each one whatever was good and praiseworthy.¹

ὦ μοι ἐγὼ, τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἰκάνω;
 ἦ ῥ' οἴ γ' ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι,
 ἦε φιλόξεينوι καὶ σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεοῦδής;
 O my! Yet again I have arrived in the land of which mortals?
 Is it that they are violent and wild, not just,
 or do they honour strangers and have godly intelligence?²

The Greek and Latin languages, their literatures and philosophy, formed the core of Anglo-American and Continental primary and secondary education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,³ those crucial eras where we can locate the beginnings of anthropology.⁴ For early anthropologists in the Enlightenment and Victorian periods, Greeks and Romans were not merely

1 Lafitau, 1724 (1974). I dedicate this essay to Marcel Detienne, my first teacher in the intersection of anthropology and classics. I conducted this research in affiliation with the Raven Research Group for the comparative study of feasting at MacEwan University.

2 Odysseus questions himself about other peoples at *Od.* 6.119–21, 13.200–202, and, with slight variation when speaking to his companions, at 9.174–76. All translations of Homer are by the author.

3 Ackerman 2008, 143; Stray 1998.

4 Eriksen and Nielsen 2013, 1.

two more civilizations to be included in the study of humanity; they were the civilizations with which they were most familiar apart from their own, and were claimed as the origin and ancestor of their civilization. Classical prefiguration of academic inquiry was a taught technique for making sense of the world.⁵ The worlds of colonial France and Victorian England grew out of classical culture (so they said), and early anthropologists understood the world by understanding the relationship between classical prefigurations and contemporary manifestations, according to a number of modes or orientations (as outlined by Vlassopoulos).⁶ In this particular way, the classics were a lens through which the world was viewed, as part of the academic toolkit from the Enlightenment to the *fin de siècle*. This classical lens is found in vestigial form in Mauss and Lévi-Strauss, who frequently mention classical sources as a guide to understanding traditional societies, citing examples that are “well known to everyone.”⁷ Because of this history and influence, Greco-Roman texts have prefigured the categories, concepts, and ultimately the enquiries that guided the work of early anthropologists in Europe and North America.

Certain features of classical civilizations prefigured or preconditioned terms of anthropological enquiry. This is evident in Fr. J.-F. Lafitau's *Customs of the American Indians* and in J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, two primary documents in the history of anthropology. The phenomena of feasting and the special treatments of food, which Lafitau presented as the *sine qua non* of Iroquois politics, were a source of anxiety for Frazer, lest his readers think “that man has created most of his gods out of his belly.”⁸ This dynamic, at the outset of anthropology, has contributed to the continuing relationship between classical texts and anthropological scholarship on food, something “that has been central to the discipline since its inception.”⁹ Examples from twenty-first century studies on the anthropology of food reveal that classical

5 Fenton and Moore, 1974, XLVI: “Until Lafitau ... the authors of collections of customs accepted the ready-made categories of the ancients.”

6 Vlassopoulos 2010.

7 Lévi-Strauss 1963, 213–31. Mauss' engagement with Greco-Roman antiquity may be deeper and more complex. Like Lafitau, some of his classical examples seem to suggest that anthropological inquiry into an aspect of culture is justified by the aspect's existence in classical texts. Mauss was devoted to the Frazerian “Dying God” theory of world myth and religion in his *Manual of Ethnography* (1967 (2007)) and, like Frazer, believed that ancients and aboriginals had similar customs due to their belonging to a primitive stage of development.

8 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 7:VII.

9 Guthman 2013. See also Coonihan 2000, 1513; Dietler 2010, 153; Sutton 2001, 5; O'Connor 2015, 6.

prefiguration and reference to classical texts continue in contemporary, theoretically sophisticated studies in the discipline.

Prefiguration and Hypertextuality

Classics has a relationship of interdiscursivity with anthropology, as it does with other academic disciplines that came into being in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ Detienne expresses this idea as follows:

The impression that the Greeks are our closest neighbors, which some of our 'humanists' may nurture, is based on common issues and categories, many of which are precisely those on which early comparative anthropology decided to focus ... Out of this dialogue that the young anthropologists of the 19th century set up between ancient Greeks and primitive peoples emerged major issues for the new discipline.¹¹

Using critical terms that specify literary relationships, classical texts have a hypertextual and metatextual structuring relationship to newer academic disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.¹² The term metatextuality expresses the idea that classical texts serve as examples in anthropological studies.¹³ The concept of hypertextuality goes further, expressing the idea that the earlier classical texts structure anthropological studies, and this is the relationship that I argue exists between the classics and the anthropology of feasting.

The classics were present at the birth of anthropology, but at which birth? Histories of anthropology discuss precursors going back to the Renaissance, the Middle Ages, Late Antiquity,¹⁴ and rarely fail to mention the inquiries of Herodotus.¹⁵ After dispensing with these primordial figures, the discipline, as

¹⁰ See the concept of interdiscursivity as articulated in Yatromanolakis 2012.

¹¹ Detienne 2009, xv.

¹² Hypertextuality is "any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not of commentary" (Genette 1997, 5). Metatextuality "is the relationship most often labelled 'commentary.' It unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it" (Genette 1997, 4). See also Avcioglu 2008.

¹³ Genette 1997, 4.

¹⁴ Slotkin 1965 (2004).

¹⁵ Eriksen and Nielsen 2013, 2.

currently pursued by scholars in universities and in the field, has beginnings in the Enlightenment and its colonial engagements,¹⁶ in the nineteenth century and Victorian England,¹⁷ and in the interwar twentieth century, when the participant-observers of living societies drove a wedge between themselves and those who contemplate human cultures from antiquity to the present.¹⁸ A close reading of early anthropological studies reveals that some aspects of classical influence have received little attention. One neglected influence is Homer, even though the perspectives of the hero Odysseus and of Homer's *Odyssey* on the peoples of the world inspired Lafitau's 1724 work comparing the Iroquois of Quebec with the Greeks and Romans. Another is the evidence that ethnography preceded history (i.e., preceded Herodotus) as a genre or distinct intellectual enterprise.¹⁹ The Greeks had their eyes fixed on "the other" ("a problem that has pursued anthropology, in various guises, up to this day")²⁰ before Herodotus, and we must accept Homeric epic, pre-Socratic philosophy, and Greco-Roman rhetorical education in *ekphrasis*²¹ as the earliest evidence for investigations into the peoples of the world in the Greco-Roman tradition.²² More texts and a broader range of genres influenced early anthropologists than is generally recognized in the history of the discipline today. Ancient cultures are portrayed in texts such as the Homeric epics, the writings of Herodotus, Plato, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and Caesar, as having certain customs, concerns, categories, activities, and even stages of development,²³ which conditioned the observations of early anthropologists.

16 Saunders 2008, 135–36; Fenton and Moore 1974, XXIX–XXX; Haddon 1910 (2004), 102; Vokes 2014, 125–26; Eriksen and Nielsen 2013, 21.

17 Eriksen and Nielsen 2013, 21–22; Detienne 2009 x–xi; Ackerman 2008, 145–46.

18 Eriksen and Nielsen 2013, 1; Detienne 2009, XIII; Ackerman 2008, 155–6.

19 This argument is first articulated by Jacoby in 1909 (1909, 80–123). Dionysius of Miletus and Charon of Lampsakos both wrote *Persika* before Herodotus was born (Skinner 2012, 4, 15, 31–2; Marincola 1997, 1–3).

20 Eriksen and Nielsen 2013, 2.

21 Skinner 2012, 17; Cole 1967, 4–5. Graf (1995, 144) records that the rhetorical handbooks of the Roman imperial period detail the appropriate subjects for *ekphrasis*, meaning "description": creatures, events, places or regions, and occasions (feasts, festivals, etc.). Descriptions of places would include descriptions of inhabitants, as they do in the historical ethnographies of Herodotus, Caesar, and Tacitus, and descriptions of events and occasions may be those of foreigners. It is easy to see the value of this training in an empire that precariously controlled most of Europe, West Asia, and North Africa.

22 Kennedy, Roy, and Goldman 2013 is an excellent compendium of testimonia on Greco-Roman views of humanity and the peoples of the world. See Cole 1967 for the subject of anthropology as pursued by Greek and Roman philosophers.

23 Cole 1967, 26.

These texts and their influence produce an intense classical prefiguration that can be described as hypertextuality. Even though anthropology changed profoundly in the 300 years since its beginning, aspects of this hypertextuality can still be detected in contemporary studies, coexisting with the metatextual relationship of commentary.

Feasting in Lafitau's *Customs of the American Indians: Greeks and Iroquois*

The Jesuit Fr. Joseph-François Lafitau, after serving as a missionary from 1713–18 at Kahnawake, Quebec,²⁴ 10 km from Montreal, composed *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times* (1724), a comparative study of the Iroquois communities around him and their relationships to Greco-Roman culture. He was guided in his pursuit by the figure of Odysseus and by Homer, whose interest in the cultures and customs of others Lafitau linked to his own. His work influenced Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Herder—each of whom is recognized for their contributions to the science of man—and was published more than 100 years before the birth of E. B. Tylor. Lafitau is also credited with anticipating anthropological interest in kinship systems in the following century, especially that of Lewis Henry Morgan.²⁵ By abstracting the Iroquois culture from its own time and situating alongside the ancient Mediterranean, he established the detemporalizing and distancing method of ethnology that influenced subsequent scholars.²⁶

Lafitau's chapter headings²⁷ show that he was interested in Iroquois culture according to traditional categories established by the ancients: the gods,

24 Information on the community of Kahnawake is available at: <http://www.kahnawake.com/>

25 Fenton and Moore 1974, xxxv.

26 Saunders 2008, 135–36.

27 The chapters are: [Vol. 1] "Design and Plan of the Work," "The Origin of the Peoples of America, Idea or Character of Primitive Peoples in General," "Religion," "Political Government," "Marriage and Education," [Vol. 2] "Occupations of the Men in the Villages," "Occupations of the Women," "Warfare," "Embassies and Trade," "Hunting and Fishing," "Games," "Sickness and Medicine," "Death, Burial, and Mourning," "Language." The chapters in Volume 1 correspond to the *a priori* categories established in Greco-Roman ethnography, and those of Volume 2 show Lafitau's innovations in defining anthropological concerns. See Fenton and Moore 1974, XLVII.

geography, and customs.²⁸ The latter had been expanded by his Reformation predecessors to include rituals and beliefs regarding religion, marriage, family, death, politics, clothing, housing, and food.²⁹ While feasting and culinary traditions appear in his chapter on “The Occupations of the Women” feasting is a more dominant feature of his chapter on “Political Government.” We learn that “public and solemn affairs almost all demand some expenditure because they are always accompanied by feasts, songs, and dances.”³⁰ He dwells on the “singing feast” or “song feast,” which is “properly the time for public affairs of any nature whatsoever, such as raising up a name, hearing ambassadors, replying to their wampum belts, declaring war, etc.”³¹ Lafitau’s argument about Iroquois political feasting is that it is an example of the practices that preceded those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, particularly those of the Dorian Greeks, and which therefore make sense of or more fully explain the ancient practices. He cites the elements of the Iroquois song feast and a hunter’s first-kill feast as literal precursors to the following elements of Greco-Roman feasts:³² the existence of the *parasitos*, the parasite who eats at another’s expense; the singing of religious poetry; the announcement of the purpose of the feast and the name of the host; the occurrence of dancing; and the distribution of honorific portions of food.³³ In describing this last feature of the song feast, he cites the *Iliad* for an example of the same practice: “The best pieces [of food] are given, by preference, to those marked out to be honoured, just as Agamemnon had Ajax served the choice piece of the breast of an ox to do him honour and repay him for the valour shown in fighting against Hector.”³⁴

The relationship between the Iroquois and the (Dorian) Greeks according to Lafitau is complex and requires analysis. He expected his classical training to provide insight into the culture of the Iroquois, and it did, but he found the opposite effect also. Iroquois culture explained some peculiar phenomena among the Greeks and Romans:

28 As seen, for example, in Herodotus, where he treats the gods (2.3–4), geography (2.4–35), and customs (2.35–99). Roman ethnography was less interested in the divine and dwelled on geography and customs, for example, Caes. *BGall.* 1–5 and Tac. *Agr.* 10–14.

29 Fenton and Moore, 1974, XLVI.

30 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:312.

31 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:319.

32 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:313–15. See Saunders 2008, 135–36, on detemporalizing, and Vlassopoulos 2010, 351–53, on “proximity,” the perspective that allowed for very close, causal connections to be made between antiquity and modernity despite chronological distance.

33 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:316–23.

34 *Il.* 7:321–22.

I confess that, if the ancient authors have given me information on which to base happy conjectures about the Indians, the customs of the Indians have given me information on the basis of which I can understand more easily and explain more readily many things in the ancient authors.³⁵

A scholar today might observe that traditional societies the world over have similar characteristics and not assume a relationship of dependency of one culture upon another; Lafitau, however, posited a causal relationship between the cultures of the Iroquois and the Greeks, consistent with the Enlightenment approach to antiquity described by Vlassopoulos as “proximity” and part of an extreme diffusionist theory of human cultures.³⁶ He presented Iroquois culture as identical to a primordial Greek culture that gave rise to the Classical Greeks, detemporalizing the few thousand years between them and imagining a culture shared between North America and the Mediterranean in pre-Classical times. To Lafitau, the preferred grain of the Iroquois, maize, must have been the primordial food of the ancient Greeks, prepared in the same way.³⁷ The Iroquois festival of binding corn was identical to festivals of Demeter or Ceres,³⁸ their feasts generally resembled those of the Dorian Greeks,³⁹ and the song feast, in particular, was the origin of practices in the republic of Lycurgus.⁴⁰ A staple of the Iroquois diet was a gruel called by Lafitau *sagamité*, which he claims was identical to and the origin of the black broth consumed by Spartans.⁴¹ Lafitau “equates aliens with ancestors,”⁴² and thereby valorises the aliens, showing how they fit into a cultural and temporal continuum, as a culture prior to that of the ancient Greeks, and foundational for European society.⁴³ A pithy summation of Lafitau’s views can be found in his statement that the Iroquois “have not yet

35 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:27.

36 Vlassopoulos 2010, 151–53.

37 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:48–56; 2:69.

38 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:55.

39 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:313–15.

40 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:319, 322. Lafitau links the song feast to the Spartan messes in general (see Plut. *Vit. Lyc.* 12, 18, 26), to the practice of announcing the contributions to the feast (see Ath. 4.141a–f), and to the performance of taunting songs and dances (see Plut. *Vit. Lyc.* 14, 25).

41 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 1:323. On “black broth” see Plut. *Vit. Lyc.* 12; O’Connor 2015, 9.

42 Saunders 2008, 135.

43 Lafitau (1724 (1974), 1:321, 323) says that the dance practices of modern Europe, such as ballet and offering flowers as an invitation to dance, originated with the Iroquois and were transformed by Greco-Roman culture resulting in contemporary French dance.

abandoned the acorns which made the forests of Dodona so famous."⁴⁴ More than suggesting that the Iroquois belong to an earlier stage of cultural evolution than the Dorian Greeks, he claims that practices identical to those of the Iroquois were the actual precursors of Greek practices. As part of an extreme diffusionist view of human culture,⁴⁵ the mythical predecessors of the Greeks were culturally identical with the Iroquois.

Food and feasting are central to this identification. It is especially in the politics of feasting where Lafitau identifies the precursors of Greek practices, but also in the food itself. Like Odysseus, some of the alien foodways he encountered were not similar to those of the ancient Greeks, but to that of the first men in the Golden Age of Greek myth.⁴⁶ Lafitau found that feasting and the distribution of honorific portions and gifts at feasts are essential to Iroquois politics and provide the context for the negotiation of all common affairs. He connected this in a causal relationship to institutions found in Dorian Greek cities and in Homer. Lafitau's recognition of these features in Iroquois society is dependent on his familiarity with classical texts, as he states explicitly (as quoted above), and with Homer and Plutarch in particular. Clear connections between food and cultural difference in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' experiences with culinary oddities in his adventures, and the associations of feasting with politics in the *Iliad* and Dorian states—Lafitau found all these aspects of food and feasting among the Iroquois. He has left us with a picture of the politics of Iroquois feasting entirely in concert with Nestor's advice to Agamemnon in *Iliad* 9:

Host a banquet for the councillors; it is proper for you, not inappropriate.
Your shelters are full of wine, which the Achaean ships
bring daily from Thrace upon the broad sea;
all generosity is yours, since you rule over many.
But when all are gathered together, be persuaded by him who advises
the best counsel. All the Achaeans are especially needful
of good and considered advice, since our enemies burn many fires
very close to the ships; who could rejoice at these things?
This night will either destroy our army or save it.⁴⁷

44 Lafitau 1724 (1974), 2:62.

45 Saunders 2008, 135.

46 The Phaeacians and the Cyclopes, closely linked in the *Odyssey* (7.199–206), each have lifeways similar to the men of the Golden Age in Hesiod and throughout Greek cosmogony.

47 *Il.* 9.70–78.

Beyond the metatextual relationship Lafitau's work has with the classical sources it cites, those sources served as underlying models that defined the terms of his study of the Iroquois. They delineated the categories of cultural features that prefigured his observations, which in turn produced a hyper-text structured by the classical hypotexts of the character of Odysseus and the politics of feasting in the *Iliad* and in Plutarch's *Lycurgus*. In a comparative study, one can expect that the content of one comparandum will prefigure the observations made on another comparandum. In this case, it is the content of the classical texts that prompted Lafitau's observations on the Iroquois.

Feasting in Frazer's *Golden Bough*: Egyptians, Greeks, and Inuit

The influence of Lafitau's work on later scholars waxed and waned. He was, however, read by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnologists and anthropologists, like L. H. Morgan and E. B. Tylor, who are identified as the founders of anthropology more often than Lafitau and his Enlightenment colleagues. He was also read by J. G. Frazer, another founding figure of anthropology. The reputation of J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and the reviled "armchair anthropology"⁴⁸ it represents, are much diminished, but his work abounds in details relevant to the anthropology of food and feasting, and its history. Arguing contrary to Lafitau, Frazer viewed the practices of traditional societies observed by ethnographers and folklorists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as more fully documented instantiations of the fragmentary and dimly lit practices of ancient Egypt, the Levant, and Greece. The commonalities were caused not by extreme diffusion but by "similar causes acting alike on the similar constitution of the human mind in different countries and under different skies,"⁴⁹ and by a universal human evolution from magic to science and from savagery to civilization.⁵⁰ His central thesis, that at the heart of most religions are gods who must die to be reborn and renew the world's fertility, is well known, and was popular among interwar anthropologists like Mauss.⁵¹ In the service of this thesis, he adduced hundreds of examples of festivals

48 Sera-Shriar 2014.

49 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 7:1

50 Ackerman 2008, 147; Morgan 1877 (1985). See Frazer 1918, preface: "Modern researches into the early history of man, conducted on different lines, have converged with almost irresistible force on the conclusion, that all civilized races have at some period or other emerged from a state of savagery resembling more or less closely the state in which many backward races have continued to the present time."

51 Mauss 1967 (2007), 191.

and rites from around the world (with a special emphasis on Arctic North America), attempting to discern their central meanings or symbolism. Many of these are feasts—sacrificial, communal, seasonal, and matrimonial. Frazer, the Hellenist and anthropologist, posited various relationships between these indigenous North American feasts and those of antiquity.

Examples of feasting and special treatments of food appear throughout the work. In two particular sections, the “Feast of All Souls” and “Eating the God,” the feasting traditions of indigenous North Americans are presented alongside those of antiquity.⁵² Frazer wished to demonstrate the universality of a Feast of All Souls that was initially inspired by the mystery cult of Osiris at Sais, during which the Egyptians “fastened oil lamps to the outside of their houses, and the lamps burned all night long.”⁵³ A favourite source of comparanda for Frazer is the Esquimaux people of Alaska, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Frazer’s Esquimaux correspond either to the Inuit or to the Yupik peoples. To show that the Egyptian festival was not only for Osiris but for the souls of all the dead, he describes a festival at Yukon River, Alaska, held annually at the transition from November to December. This festival involves a significant outlay of food, drink, and clothing in the central house of the village, which is illuminated for the festival with oil lamps. The goods are offered to the ghosts of the dead, with small portions of the food from every dish thrown down on the floor, followed by libations of water. After this, the food is distributed to the celebrants, and there is a feast followed by songs and dances.⁵⁴ The mystery of Osiris at Sais preserves no indication that it was a ritual in honour of the souls of all the dead, but in order to argue that it was, Frazer presents the ritual from Yukon River. He emphasizes the oil lamps to show that the festival of Osiris was an instantiation of “the widespread belief that the souls of the dead revisit their old homes on one night of the year, and on that solemn occasion people prepare for the reception of the ghosts by laying out food for them to eat, and lighting lamps to guide them on their dark road from and to the grave.”⁵⁵

Frazer supplies the fragmentary record of the mystery of Osiris with detail from Inuit tradition, adduced not so much to explain the Egyptian practice but to bolster Frazer’s contention that a Feast of All Souls is a universal practice. Frazer as anthropologist’s interest in the Inuit or Yupik is structured first by his Christian culture and its festivals, which establish the category of a Feast of All Souls, and secondly by the mystery cult of Osiris at Sais, for which he relies

52 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 6:49–52; Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 8:72–86.

53 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 6:51.

54 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 6:49–52.

55 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 6:51.

on the testimony of Herodotus.⁵⁶ The existence of the Christian festival, and a possible parallel in an authoritative classical text, prompted and conditioned his exploration of the topic in the ethnographic literature.

In his chapter “Eating the God” in Volume 8, Frazer focuses on a generalized corn-spirit who must be consumed to be renewed. This brings new dimensions to the idea of a dying god, that the god’s body becomes food for the people, and that gods have special affinities for certain foods. The well-known ancient Greek, Roman, and Hebrew practice of offering first-fruits is explored by Frazer earlier in the *Golden Bough*.⁵⁷ In this section on “Eating the God,” Frazer focuses on traditional societies of Europe, Africa, and the Americas, furnishing these with a few ancient examples.

The chapter is an enormous list of practices from around the globe in which plants and animals are personified when eaten. This is Frazer’s attempt to demonstrate the universality of well-documented Greek and Hebrew practices. He concludes:

In all cases it seems reasonable to infer that the scruples which savages manifest at eating the first fruits of any crop, and the ceremonies which they observe before they overcome their scruples, are due at least in large measure to a notion that the plant or tree is animated by a spirit or even a deity, whose leave must be obtained, or whose favour must be sought before it is possible to partake with safety of the new crop.⁵⁸

He sees this as a stage of development towards the practices of the ancients, where the vegetation is not seen as the god, but rather as the gift of the god to man, a portion of which must be returned in “gratitude and homage to his divine benefactors.”⁵⁹ This represents a shift in orientation reminiscent of Lafitau, where the ancient practices are later developments from those found in newly discovered traditional societies.

After Frazer established to his satisfaction that the sacrament of first fruits (eating the god) and their sacrifice are universal stages of development in religious thought, he argues that this is the reason certain deities have an affinity

56 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 6:49–51, citing Herodotus 2.129–31, 170, and esp. 2.62 for the lamps that accompanied the festival of Osiris, which goes by the name *Luchnokaîē*, “Lighting of Lamps.”

57 *Il.* 9.534; Theophr. *On Piety*, passim; In the Hebrew Bible, Ex. 23:19; 34:26, Num. 15:17–21, 18:12–13; Deut. 26:1–11. See also Cole 1967, 55.

58 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 8:82.

59 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 8:86.

or aversion to certain foods. The Inuit sea goddess Sedna has an aversion to terrestrial meat, and it can anger her if venison is stored with seafood, or if the two are mixed in the stomach of a consumer.⁶⁰ Frazer refers to examples of ancient Greek taboos involving certain foods and entrance to temples, claiming that these beliefs are related to the primitive idea that the gods reside in the food.

In like manner the ancient Greeks, of whose intellectual kinship with savages like the Esquimaux and the Melanesians we have already met with many proofs, laid it down as a rule that a man who had partaken of the black ram offered to Pelops at Olympia might not enter into the temple of Zeus, and that persons who had sacrificed to Telephus at Pergamus might not go up to the temple of Aesculapius until they had washed themselves, just as the Esquimaux who have eaten venison must wash before they may partake of seal or whale or walrus meat.⁶¹

The parallelism Frazer constructs between Inuit and ancient Greek practices reveals that his disposition, like that of some other classical scholars at the turn of the century, was to accentuate the primitive qualities of classical civilizations.⁶² Lafitau had inserted the Iroquois at an evolutionary stage prior to Greek civilization, equating them with those very same proto-Greeks, in an apparent effort to elevate the Iroquois in scholarly discourse by placing them in a cultural continuum with Enlightenment France. Frazer, to the contrary, wished to highlight the primitive qualities of Greek religion. There is no attempt in Frazer to valorise the Inuit practices; instead, they are introduced as proof of the savagery of the Greeks, proof that they are so superstitious as to believe that a god prefers or disdains certain foods!

Frazer was anxious that his study not appear to be one devoted to food and the nutritive power of plants and animals, which is in itself a fascinating artefact in the history of the anthropology of food. Gods of vegetation, kings of the wood, and fertility deities are his subjects, and these all relate to the provision of food and to the survival of human communities. After he completed his study of “the Dying and Reviving God” in the ancient Near East, he turned to ancient Greece and Rome, as well as to the more distant regions of the world, revealed through colonial enterprise, which had only recently attracted the attention of scholars. In the preface to Volume 7, Frazer expresses his concern about food and its role in the history of religions:

60 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 8:84–85.

61 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 8:85.

62 Ackerman 2008, 144.

But having said so much in this book of the misty glory which the human imagination sheds round the hard material realities of the food supply, I am unwilling to leave my readers under the impression, natural but erroneous, that man has created most of his gods out of his belly. That is not so, at least that is not my reading of the history of religion. Among the visible, tangible, perceptible elements by which he is surrounded—and it is only of these that I presume to speak—there are others than the merely nutritious which have exerted a powerful influence in touching his imagination and stimulating his energies, and so have contributed to build up the complex fabric of religion.⁶³

As the preface comes to its end, he adduces two domains which he suggests were equal or superior inspirations to religion in the history of man: sex—the relations between men and women—and the influence of powerful men who were likely divinized after death. Frazer says these must be dealt with, delicately, by future researchers. He offers here no further indication why concern about the fertility of plants and animals is an insufficient inspiration to religion. Nor does he explain why a reader of his volumes should come away with an impression different than that of the central importance in world religions of “the Dying and Reviving God” of vegetation, conceived in hunter-gatherer societies as animal spirits.

As Frazer realized to his chagrin, the *Golden Bough* remains very much a study of the human animal’s relationship to its sources of food and the elaboration of this relationship in ritual and religion. *The Golden Bough* shows how the interests of a Hellenist structured the concerns of anthropology in the early twentieth century, even if all disciplines involved, anthropology, classics, Near Eastern studies, and religious studies, subsequently preferred an uneasy isolation from one another.⁶⁴ Culture and religion, as found in the classical texts he favoured (those of Herodotus, Pausanias, Diodorus Siculus, and Apollodorus) inspired his belief in their universality, and combined with the influence of the Semitist and early anthropologist William Robertson Smith, set him on his quest to find instantiations of ancient culture and religion in the practices of traditional societies around the globe.⁶⁵ On the smaller scale of individual arguments, sometimes the work of early anthropologists on a traditional society, such as the Inuit, caused him to reinterpret the classical evidence. His interpretations of the mystery of Osiris and Greek cultic taboos

63 Frazer 1906–15 (1935), 7:VII–VIII.

64 Ackerman 2008, 155–56.

65 Ackerman 2008, 146.

show evidence of prefiguration in the other direction: the texts of Inuit ethnography are hypotexts drawn on in his argument that Egyptian and Greek practices conform to the universal “Feast of All Souls” and “Spirit of the Corn.”

The Feast and Commensal Politics in the Twenty-First Century

Lafitau and Frazer built their anthropological studies around the categories established in the classical hypotexts with which they were very familiar. In doing so, they articulated some concerns of the anthropology of feasting that continue today. Lafitau observed that feasting was integral to politics among the Iroquois and the ancient Greeks, which is consistent with the idea that feasts are political tools and often articulate social distinctions,⁶⁶ referred to as commensal politics.⁶⁷ Frazer saw that his study pertained to the elaboration in ritual and religion of the human relationship to food, anticipating the idea that “food was symbol as well as sustenance, linking body and spirit, past and present, place and person, self and society,” having an “associated cosmology that connected food to religion, myth, magic, and belief.”⁶⁸

The anthropology of food and feasting today is not only subject to the influences of this relationship, but has continuously engaged with the ancient Mediterranean. This continued engagement is evident in the work of Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, important theorists in the anthropology of feasting whose research involves cultures in the ancient Mediterranean and contemporary traditional cultures around the world.⁶⁹ Such research interests have resulted in a branch of anthropology that neither eschews classical sources nor demotes them to illustrative examples that allow readers to think their way into issues in traditional societies.⁷⁰ A recent overview of the anthropology of food, E. N. Anderson’s *Everybody Eats* (2005), seems to combine the hypertextuality of classical prefiguration with the metatextuality of resorting to classical texts as examples. This feature of the anthropology of food and feasting has the potential to create a troubling circularity, where concerns and categories derived from classical texts and theoretically elaborated with ethnographic data are applied to classical texts as analytical tools. As Anderson’s

66 Rappaport 1999, 141, cf. 84–85; Coonihan 2000, 1514; Dietler 2001, 76–80; Sutton 2001, 5; Anderson 2005, 125; O’Connor 2015, 9.

67 Dietler 1996.

68 O’Connor 2015, 8, 17–18.

69 Dietler 1990, 1996, 2001, 2010. Hayden 2001, 2009; Hayden and Villeneuve 2011.

70 As is the case in Lévi-Strauss 1963, 213–31.

study demonstrates, however, this does not cause an evidentiary or hermeneutic problem for anthropology because the status of the classical text as hypotext is implicitly or explicitly acknowledged, and moreover, the classical text is not the target of the analysis. There are potential problems for classicists in the application of anthropological theory to ancient cultures. Because of the relationship of classics to anthropology, the observation that an anthropological theory is substantiated by a classical example is never a discovery in itself. Discoveries can be made if the anthropological theory generates new hypotheses and prompts the inclusion of additional ancient data that would not have been adduced without the guidance of the theory.

Anderson's section on "Food as social marker" is a useful example of the use of classical texts in anthropology. His discussion of cannibalism begins with a quote of Herodotus on the topic.⁷¹ He does not use Herodotus as an example of a practice but cites Herodotus as evidence of early interest in the phenomenon, and as an early exponent of the theory that shared customs define cultures. He discusses Herodotus as a contribution to an intellectual debate. This method implicitly accepts the ancient text as a hypotext of anthropological scholarship and approaches an academic discourse of "doing anthropology with the Greeks" long advocated by Detienne.⁷²

Anderson uses another classical text differently, this time as an example of a worldwide practice in his discussion of the Northwest Coast potlatch. After years of controversy stemming from an erroneous theory that potlatches existed to even out resources among different groups, to distribute food to those who had little, it is now generally agreed that "the potlatch validated the title of a chief and solidified support for him in war."⁷³ He cites the *Iliad* as an example of this practice, which corresponds to Dietler's category of a "patron-role feast."⁷⁴ Anthropological interest in the politics of feasting in the *Iliad* goes back to Lafitau, and so its status in the anthropology of feasting should be conceived of as a hypotext and not only as a source of examples. Here, Anderson is addressing a widespread phenomenon, not something special or specific to the *Iliad*, and in this context citing ancient texts as evidence is not problematic. Classicists can encounter a problem when they recognize that anthropological theories of feasting apply very well to Homer. Dietler's patron-role feast, which "involves the formalized use of commensal hospitality to symbolically reiterate and legitimize institutionalized relations of asymmetrical

71 Anderson 2005, 131. Hdt. 3.38.

72 Detienne 2007, 2009.

73 Anderson 2005, 95, referring to Drucker and Heizer 1967.

74 Dietler 2001, 82

social power;⁷⁵ aptly describes every feast narrated in the *Iliad*. It is an instantiation of the more general theory devised by Roy Rappaport, that “the material components of ritual are especially appropriate for the indexical transmission of messages concerning the current state of the transmitters.”⁷⁶ The applicability of these theories should, in the first place, be treated as evidence that the field of anthropology had the rituals and social practices found in the Homeric poems as structuring influences. Even so, the anthropological theories, with their rich ethnographic underpinnings, can lead to discoveries in classics, but their confirmation in classical texts is no discovery at all. Expressed positively, we should expect that cultures of the ancient Mediterranean will often substantiate anthropological theories.

Conclusion

The cultures revealed through ancient Greek texts sparked the interest in “the science of the manners and customs of different peoples” among early anthropologists. It led to both a metatextual and a more significant hypertextual relationship between classical texts and anthropological scholarship, in which early anthropologists cited ancient examples and structured their enquiries around ancient concerns so that modern anthropology cannot avoid its relevance and referentiality to classics. In studies of the history of anthropology and its early influences, a greater number of classical sources must be considered; the Homeric poems, in particular, have been largely neglected in this history. Despite the circularity suggested by the hypertextual relationship, modern anthropological theory and ethnography have interpretive power for ancient societies for the reasons Lafitau recognized early on: the observation of living traditional societies can aid our understanding of the Greeks and Romans, since the remains of those cultures are fragmentary and disconnected, requiring theory and comparanda to help fill in the gaps.

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The Anthropology of an Island Cult: Samothrace and the Science of Man in the Nineteenth Century

Sandra Blakely

The Island and the Anthropologists

An anthropological perspective on mystery religions has been part of the Samothracian tradition since antiquity, when the island was “good to think with” for questions of ethnography, primitivism, and cultural evolution. Located at the far northeast corner of the Aegean, only 29 miles from the Thracian shore, Samothrace was an important meeting ground for Greeks and Thracians. This was recalled in both its rites and its name. Scholiasts report that the latter commemorated both the Samian Greeks who colonized the island and the island’s original Thracian inhabitants.¹ The language of these Thracians seems to have been used in the rites themselves: over 70 ceramic inscriptions from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE are written in what has been identified as Thracian, and Diodorus Siculus, in the first century BCE, reported that the Samothracians used the words of the island’s autochthonous inhabitants in the mysteries.² The *daimones* associated with the rites share in this ethnographic conversation, as they appear in other mythological narratives as pre-Greek, non-Greek first men.³ The sanctuary’s structures evoked this prehistory, in the form of a faux Mycenaean doorway, archaizing sculpture, numerous *bothroi*, and aniconic stones as objects of celebration.⁴ That this chronological primitivism was linked with cultural primitivism is suggested by connections between the island’s *daimones* and cultural invention, the Daktyloi with ironworking, the Kabeiroi and Dardanus with the invention of rafts.⁵ These first inventions inform the semantics of the rites in the magnetized iron rings

1 Scholiast to Lycoph. *Alex.* 78; Scholia Townleiana to *Il.* 13.12.

2 Diod. Sic. 5.47.14–16; Brixhe 2006.

3 Blakely 2006, 17–53.

4 Blakely 2012.

5 Philo of Byblos, *BNJ* 790 F 2; Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 1.10.14; Baumgarten 1981, 228–29; cf. Conon *BNJ* 26F1 tale 21; Hemberg 1950, 86; Caduff 1986, 135–42.

worn as tokens of initiation and in the promise that initiates would be kept safe in travel at sea.⁶

These ancient engagements with anthropological questions did not draw the attention of the Cambridge Ritualists. This may reflect the lack of British involvement in the island's archaeological exploration. Continental scholars, however, used the island's myths to reconstruct the tales of mankind which most answered their scholarly interests. These myths are recovered through a complex collection of fragmentary references, which stretch from the fifth century BCE to the Byzantine era, preserved in sources which range from historical fragments to comic performances and grammatical lexica.⁷ Samothracian rites figure in well-known narratives—the voyage of the Argonauts, the wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia, Aeneas' flight from Troy. The island's mythological population, however, extends far beyond these, including Cyclopes, Earth and Sky, and figures who lie beyond the familiar canon of Greek and Roman divinities. It is the latter, in the form of *daimones* associated with the invention of metallurgy, which drew the attention of anthropologically-minded scholars. The metallurgical elements of these *daimones* opened the door to exploring the connections between ritual, technology and economy, connections which would fuel the functionalism of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown in the early twentieth century. German scholars used these myths to construct models of the rites which reflected philosophical idealism and a nationalistic pride in Teutonic folklore, buttressed through the science of *IndoGermanistik* and informed by Romantic concerns to access the earliest religion of mankind. The island's rites became a manifestation of the culture from which their own metallurgical dwarves emerged. French scholars read the myths as a tale of the evolution of man through technological invention. These models reflect colonial encounters with cultures which did not have metallurgy, the centrality of political activism in contemporary anthropology, and the ironworkers who were reshaping the political and architectural landscape of Paris. All of these hypotheses were founded on the island's *daimones*: myth was to be used a tool in the investigation of early man. It was a preservation of distant cultural memory, however selectively preserved and fantastically embellished.

These Samothracian studies offer a distinctive perspective on the relationship between Classics and continental anthropology in the nineteenth century. They foreground the differences between German and French on the one hand, early and late century on the other. Nationalism, evolutionary paradigms,

6 Blakely 2013.

7 References collected in Lewis 1958.

and social activism separate them from the myth and ritual debates of the Cambridge school. Samothracian studies also highlight three challenges of bringing anthropological perspectives to the classical past: the ethnographic subject, the scientific framework, and the relationship between textual and archaeological analyses. Neither German nor French writers were able to view the Greeks as primitives, or a genuinely ethnographic “other.” Greeks were norms of culturally evolved sophistication, a universalized past of civilized man.⁸ This identification between scholar and subject has characterized the study of Classics since the Renaissance and problematized the combination of Classics and Anthropology from the onset.⁹ Both French and German scholars brought scientific approaches—linguistics, ethnography, and comparative models—to the cult. This reflects Rousseau’s 1755 call for an empirically based science of man as part of the investigation of the possibility of progress.¹⁰ Applied to mystery religions, these approaches foreground the epistemological challenge fundamental to Romantic anthropology: the combination of the objective with the mystic. And finally, these models for Samothrace occupy an entirely different scholarly realm from the island’s archaeology. None of the *daimones* mentioned in the fragmentary accounts of the island’s mythology appear on Samothrace’s inscriptions or iconography. As regular work on the sanctuary commenced in the mid-twentieth century, this gap between archaeological and literary evidence became increasingly apparent. Linforth, writing in the 1920s, called for a separation of the two investigations.¹¹ Hemberg (1950) and Cole (1984) both agreed that the *daimones* should not be considered part of the cult.¹² By 1993, Burkert was able to characterize studies of Samothrace as *concordia discors*—a complete rift between material and textual evidence.¹³ With the removal of the *daimones* from the study of the site, anthropological and archaeological models diverged. The island, which in the nineteenth century was one of the richest loci for anthropological approaches to antiquity, had by the close of the twentieth century become a model of the difficulty of combining the fields.

The literary evidence for the rites reminds us, however, that the science of man was part of the ancient idea of Samothrace and that the island’s initiates experienced myths as well as monuments in their approach to the cult. The

8 Detienne 2007.

9 Zimmerman 2001, 3; Kuklick 2008, 7, 22–25.

10 Rousseau 1755, 203–13, cited in Stocking 1996, 65.

11 Linforth 1926.

12 Hemberg 1950, 74–76, 78; Cole 1984, 2.

13 Burkert 1993.

nineteenth-century models for the rites ultimately prove historically untenable and, therefore, irrelevant for a culture-historical archaeology. They share, however, with the ancient initiates an approach to the island as a place for building models of the upward evolution of mankind. These anthropological models thus offer a tool in the exploration of *histoire de mentalité*, distinct from the *histoire evenementielle* which is the appropriate goal of architectural and prosopographic history. Two authors may serve as guides to the emergence and function of these models: Friedrich Schelling in Germany and Jean-Pierre Rossignol in France.

*Romantics, Philosophers, and IndoGermanistik: Samothrace
at the Dawn of German Anthropology*

On October 12, 1815, in honour of the name day of King Maximilian IV Joseph of Bavaria, Friedrich W. J. von Schelling delivered a public lecture to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences: *Über die Gottheiten von Samothrake*. After the lecture, Schelling added a long series of notes and published it as an appendix to his monumental *Ages of the World*.¹⁴ Schelling himself was very pleased with the lecture. He described it in his correspondence as less an appendix to a completed work than a commencement and transition to all his other works, in which he intended to provide a historical analysis of the proper primal system of humanity. The essay received little notice from his contemporaries. Among recent scholars, it has been read as a manifestation of his speculative theological philosophy, the culmination of his thinking about divine nature in response to the work of the seventeenth-century mystic and theologian Jacob Boehme.¹⁵ The essay has received even less attention within Samothracian studies. It makes virtually no reference to the material remains from the island and, out of the many texts relevant to the cult, focuses largely on a single fragment of Mnaseas.

As a document of anthropological interest, however, Schelling's essay is in many ways an ideal framework for exploring how Samothrace served the interests of German anthropology in the first half of the nineteenth century. Stocking has characterized this as an unfortunate Dark Age in histories of anthropology, dark for the lack of attention rather than the lack of significance.¹⁶ German anthropology in this period reflects an enormous popular interest in the science of man; input from the reports of travellers, uniquely free of colonial ambitions and their distortion; and a deep heritage of language studies.

14 Krell 2005, 135; Schelling 1815 (1958); Brown 1974.

15 Cardew 2012, 130; Brown 1974, 45–46.

16 Bolyanatz 2004, 64; Stocking 1973, xii; Stocking 1991, 20–25; Penny and Bunzl 2003, 1–2.

These built on nationalistic desires, which translated into a focus on German *Volk* studies, and on the Enlightenment tradition of philology which compiled, systematized, and analysed non-German and non-European languages, leading to the emergence of *IndoGermanistik*.¹⁷ At the base of German anthropology in the nineteenth century is a rich epistemological debate between the Romantic and the Scientific, and the desire to integrate the two. Anthropology, through the eighteenth century, had been informed by the argument that man was divided into two types of components: the physical and sensible, and the moral and intellectual. These were to be studied through separate disciplines: natural science for the first, metaphysics for the second.¹⁸ In Germany, however, this division was challenged. Many German anthropologists were doctors, who sought to combine their strong foundations in physiological anthropology with the teaching of reason in the Kantian tradition. The goal thereby was *Bildung*, an improvement of the moral as well as the physical condition of man. The ethical responsibility to undertake this improvement is one of the most distinctive characteristics of German anthropology in this century. The tension between Romantic and Scientific epistemologies translated into practical questions on the relationship of fieldwork to deductive arguments and an abstract universality. A Romantic, idealized perspective still lingers in contemporary anthropology; it introduces an inaccuracy which hinders social activism, a problem noted in publications on Nepal, the American Southwest, and Tahiti.¹⁹ In Schelling's case, however, precisely his inferences, leaps, and inaccuracies enabled his reaching for the moral goal of anthropology through the revelation of the rationality behind the mystery rites.

The Romantic and linguistic elements of German anthropology appear most quickly in Schelling's essay; more subtle is the epistemological debate between science and metaphysics. Nature, emotion, memory, primordial antiquity, Longing and the Feminine, and transcendence figure prominently. These were *topoi* in contemporary Romantic literature, in which Greek mystery religions were favoured images of the perfection of nature, the praise of memory, the centrality of the feminine, and the inadequacy of words.²⁰ Schelling opens with a paean to the dramatic landscape of the island, formed by "convulsions of nature" in the form of floods and volcanoes. These created

17 Gingrich 2005, 64.

18 Wellmon 2010, 6.

19 Fisher 1987; Herzfeld 1989, 1–28; Stocking 1989; Fowler 2000; Carey 2003; Bolyanatz 2004; Kuklick 2008.

20 Wind 1958; Primer 1964; Raine 1968; Kearney 1979; Solomon 1983, 139; Priestman 2002; Louis 2005; Bartolini 2005, 245; Zichner 2006, 112.

“terrors of memory” which directed the minds of the ancient visitors and inhabitants to the indwelling gods. Schelling’s Samothrace is in the process of emerging: his imaginary exploration of the island reflects the Romantic image of nature as an untameable power, and Schelling’s own *Naturphilosophie*, in which he sought to overcome the transcendent separations between man and thing, spirit and matter which Kant identified in *Critique of Pure Reason*.²¹

Schelling moves quickly to emphasize his confidence in finding, on the island, the oldest religion of mankind: he selects those texts which connect the rites to the Pelasgians.²² Nineteenth-century mythographers made great use of Pelasgians as a route to uncovering the primordial unconsciousness in mystery religions and myth.²³ Creuzer had identified them as the embodiment of that point at which matter and spirit merged, and as priests who brought the secret teachings to Greece from the East.²⁴ Schelling’s Pelasgians index the irretrievable antiquity of Samothracian doctrine, as even they could apprehend the teaching only as a dimmed recollection, devoid of their “natural innocence and freshness.” Schelling sought to recover this freshness by applying the science of linguistics to the Samothracian names preserved by Mnaseas. Mnaseas was a third-century BCE Periegetic writer, likely a student of Eratosthenes. He wrote that the Samothracian gods were named Axieros, Axiokersos, Axiokersa, and Kadmilos, and identified these with Demeter, Persephone, Hades, and Hermes. Scaliger, in the sixteenth century, had used Indo-European linguistics to identify Semitic origins for the gods of Samothrace, and Faber connected the *daimones* to biblical flood narratives in his 1803 dissertation.²⁵ Schelling built on this long tradition, and claimed that he too would proceed along the “hazardous path” of philology, a science which crazily mixed diverse traditions to “derive everything from everything.”²⁶ He confidently generalized about Levantine cultures as a world in which all names had meaning, declared Phoenician and Hebrew “bound tighter with an uncontestable unity” and cited briefly, but confidently, comparanda from Greece, Rome, and Old German. The thesis he sought to support with science was Romantic: he found in these names multiple proofs of the centrality of longing and the feminine to the Samothracian rites.²⁷ Thus the Phoenician root for “Axieros” was “longing”;

21 Cardew 2012, 114–15.

22 Schelling 1815 (1958), 349.

23 Cardew 2012, 103–7.

24 Cardew 2012, 107, citing Creuzer 1819, 1:63.

25 Hemberg 1950, 11–12, 27–28, 135, 259, 318–25; Chapouthier 1935, 5–18; Beekes 2004; Faber 1803; cf. Haury 1908.

26 Cardew 2012, 16.

27 On Sehnsucht, see Eldridge 2001, 31–52.

Axiokersos, as Ceres, embodied hunger. The central role of desire in cosmogonies from Hesiod to Plato, and in goddesses from Egypt, Germany, and Rome as well as Greece, reinforced his argument. The Phaethon sculpted by Skopas on Samothrace became *Sehnsucht* and a parallel to the Pothos who, with him, flanked the image of the island's Venus.²⁸ And in Kadmilos Hermes, Schelling found—through Hebrew linguistics—the herald of a greater god yet to come. The “doctrine of the Kabeiroi” mapped a trajectory from subordinate nature deities up to the transcendent god. This was a Romantic goal, achieved through the science of comparative linguistics.

What linguistics provided for Schelling, the natural science of magnetism provided for his contemporary, Johann Schweigger. Magnetism played a major role in Romantic natural philosophy as one of the “mystic disciplines” which grew out of the natural sciences; the articles and journals dedicated to the subject index the breadth of interest it generated.²⁹ Schelling saw it as one of the dynamics which granted cohesion to the natural world, among the most important manifestations of the *Urpolarität* which underlies all entities, “from crystals to man.”³⁰ It was also a phenomenon capable of laboratory experiments, as demonstrated by the Danish physicist Hans Christian Oersted (1777–1851) and the German physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776–1810). Oersted's major achievement was the demonstration of the action of electric current on a magnetized needle; his publication shows the influence of Schelling in conceptualizing electrical conductibility as conflict, “einen elektrischen Wechselkampf.”³¹ Ritter combined his studies in physics with literary pursuits, composing dithyrambs which reflect the influence of Novalis and the Romantic circle in Jena.³² Magnetism had been part of the Samothracian rites from at least the time of Lucretius, who described the magnetic force of Samothracian iron rings. The potential for these to have been used as tokens of initiation has led to intriguing speculation on the process of magnetization as itself part of the *epopteia* of the Samothracian rites.³³ Schweigger explored these rings through both historical sources and laboratory experimentation in his 1836 dissertation, “Einleitung in die Mythologie auf dem Standpunkte der

28 Lattimore 1987, 411n2.

29 Pezold 1797; Hufeland 1805; Fischer 1805; Nasse 1809 and 1815; Müller 1811; *Archiv für den thierischen Magnetismus* ran from 1817–1824, and was resumed in 1825–26 with *Neues archive für den Thierischen Magnetismus und das Nachtleben überhaupt*.

30 Wetzels 1971; Snelders 1970.

31 Snelders 1971, 199, 202.

32 Von Simson 1942, 342.

33 DRN 6.1043–1047. Blakely 2012.

Naturwissenschaft.”³⁴ Schweigger was deeply engaged in the Romantic search for higher synthesis in nature and found ancient mysteries likely repositories for natural science. He took up two of the mythological figures associated with the rites—the Dioskouroi and the Idaian Daktyloi—and explored them as models of the principle of electromagnetism. He argued that the stars which hovered above the heads of the Dioskouroi should be understood as electric sparks; one youth represents the positive, the other the negative electricity, based on the movement suggested in their physical stance. The images embodied the connection between the direction of the current and the magnetic force articulated by Ampère in 1820. Schweigger constructed an apparatus, which led positive and negative electrical charges into a bed of water, to demonstrate the activity of the Dioskouroi in the presence of water nymphs.³⁵ In the tradition of magnetized iron rings, he saw a formal symbol as well as a demonstration of magnetism, as their circular form would have served as models of the interactive arcs between two magnetic poles. The rites of Samothrace thus transmitted an ancient *Naturweisheit*—a phenomenon which could be demonstrated as well in Japanese, Chinese and Indian traditions.

Both Schweigger and Schelling were determined to integrate the scientific and the metaphysical. This is a goal which emerged from Kant’s anthropology and affirms the Romantic transcendence and philosophy of Nature. Schelling brought together metaphysics, science, and the principle of the case study. His metaphysical framework was his desire to establish a systematic model for the whole of mankind; his science was linguistics, the “most noble” of them all. His observations in *Die Vergangenheit* make clear that he considered Samothrace a case study of his larger study of the Ages of Man. An insistence on case studies was part of the concern to move away from the seventeenth-century style of sciences which privileged categories and abstract, systematizing, deductive reasoning. The new goal was to create observation-based sciences of life.³⁶ The result, however, is riddled with difficulties. Schelling’s approach to these sciences shows the search for rigid structures and the use of aphorism which underwrote his natural philosophy. The extreme fragmentation of the Samothracian record, combined with Schelling’s selective use of it, left ample room for free speculation and system building. The production of that system was, on the one hand, consistent with the ethical goal of nineteenth-century German *Bildung* which sought to render real knowledge accessible, in all its rationality. His essay demonstrates, however, the difficulties of bringing an

34 Schweigger 1836, 141.

35 Snelders 1971.

36 Brown 1974, 7; Wellmon 2010, 15–48; Gadol 1974; Zammito 2002, 221; Swift 2006, 77–97.

epistemology which favoured observation and sensual experience to a fragmentary ancient record of rites sealed by vows of secrecy. Goethe seems to satirize Schelling's use of the cult as an exemplum of his speculative philosophy when he inserts the Kabeiroi in the witches' Sabbath of *Faust*. They appear at the height of this ritual scene as creatures who are "constantly creating themselves, without ever knowing what they are"³⁷—an image of epistemology and system-building gone comically awry.³⁸

The potential for these Kabeiroi to be understood as Germanic dwarves is among the most long-lived notions derived from Schelling's essay. The connection between these dwarves and Romantic anthropology, on the one hand, and German nationalism, on the other, is rarely noted. Schelling built this identification through Indo-European linguistics, broad comparative material, and a handful of ancient references. Behind these lie the Romantic enthusiasm for "mystic mineralogy" which informs E. T. A. Hoffman's *Die Bergwerke zu Falun* (1819), Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), and Ludwig Tieck's *Der Alte vom Berge* (1828).³⁹ The mine became an image of the soul, and miners could be conceptualized as astrologers in reverse as they studied rocks and mountains. To Novalis, the astrologers found the future in the sky, while miners brought to light the monuments of the *primaeva* world.⁴⁰ Schelling brought the Kabeiroi into this realm by demonstrating their small size, their association with magic, and their metallurgy. *Pataiki*, *Penates*, and Etrusco-Roman *camilli* were all summoned in support of the argument that the Kabeiroi were small in size: Herodotus compared them to *Pataiki*, Phoenician tutelary guardians of ships;⁴¹ Roman traditions identified Samothracian gods with *Penates*, small enough for Anchises to carry out of Troy in his hands. Evidence that the Kabeiroi were attendants on other gods made them comparable to Etrusco-Roman *camilli*, often depicted as boys. Schelling placed this against the universal typology of the dwarf as a conflation of aged people and youthful servants, known from Old German and Norse representations. The linguistic connections among German *Zwerg*, Old German *Tuwerk*, and Greek *theourgós* affirmed a commonality not only in size but magical force. True to Schelling's goals, the magic of the Samothracian gods was restricted to the power to bind lowest with highest—and thus draw man upward.⁴²

37 *Faust* II 8075–77.

38 Brown 1984, 80–81; Hamlin 1976, 333.

39 Cardew 2012, 112.

40 Ziolkowski 1990, 18–63; Hilty 1972, 86.

41 Hdt. 3.37.

42 Schelling 1815 (1958), 26–27.

Later Indo-European scholars found much more evidence to support Schelling's hypothesis of dwarfish Samothracians in the Daktyloi, Telchines, and Kabeiroi associated with the island. The Grimms compared the Idaian Daktyloi, "fingers of Ida," to German dwarves and declared Herakles the Daktyl an ancient analogue of Tom Thumb. "Finger" and "fist" names for dwarves in Sanskrit, Old Prussian, Slavic and Bohemian supported these equations.⁴³ Lagarde and Blinkenberg derived the name of the Telchines from the same stem as German *Zwerge*.⁴⁴ Wackernagel found confirmation of dwarfish types for the Kabeiroi in the derivation of Kabeiros from Sanskrit *Kubera* or *Kuvera*, postulating an Indo-European word **Kabera*, meaning "the ill shaped one."⁴⁵ Iconographic corroboration seemed to emerge from the Theban Kabirion, in the form of the fat-bellied, scrawny-legged, kinky-haired dwarfish figures which decorate enormous drinking vessels and kraters of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. They wear fillets and veils, dance with torches, feast with copious amounts of wine, and in one famous image emerge from the ground as the "first man."⁴⁶ Otto Kern, in 1890, enthusiastically linked these to the gods of Samothrace.⁴⁷

These dwarfish figures, once combined with metallurgical powers, became appropriate vehicles for connecting the mysteries of Samothrace to German folk traditions. Three of the *daimones* associated with the Samothracian rites have mythical associations with metallurgy. Herodotus and Callimachus described the Kabeiroi as the sons of Hephaistos; the Idaian Daktyloi, whom Ephorus identifies as the founders of the rites, were inventors of iron working; the Telchines were masters of bronze casting and magically animated statues.⁴⁸ Schelling used this metallurgy to connect the Kabeiroi to the Germanic gnomes described in Agricola's sixteenth-century accounts of miners' traditions.⁴⁹ The Grimm brothers expanded upon this Indo-European connection with comparisons to Sanskrit, Hittite, Semitic, and Sumerian as well as Hellenic and Germanic traditions.⁵⁰ The association with metallurgy took various forms: Dossin noted potential sources for the Kabeiric name in the Sumerian bronze industry;⁵¹ Wackernagel compared Kabeiroi to Kubera of

43 Grimm 1875, 372; cf. Kamenetsky 1992; Zipes 1988; Ellis 1983.

44 Blinkenberg 1915, 287; cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1895, 242; Herter 1934, 199.

45 Wackernagel 1907, 314–18; cf. Frisch 1960, 750; Kretschmer 1927, 55, 75; Ehrhardt 1985, 101.

46 Cruccas 2014, 72–82; Daumas 1998, 49–89.

47 Kern 1890; Schachter 2005.

48 Blakely 2006, 1–45.

49 Schelling 1815 (1958), 365; Brown 1974, 7.

50 Grimm 1875, 369–90; Dasen 1993, 194–98.

51 Dossin 1953; Deroy 1955.

the Atharvasamhita epic, the embodiment of unspeakable powers under the earth; in the *Puranas* he is the god of gold and treasures, an ugly fat dwarf in a white robe with jewels. Later traditions knew him as the god of buried treasure, a pot-bellied dwarf.⁵² The Grimm brothers noted that the narratives of these dwarves combined metallurgy with the protection of cultural boundaries. They emerged as a mythological type for indigenous resistance to cultural invaders, diminutive champions of the autochthonous and original.⁵³ In both their symbolism and their status as folk belief, these dwarves served the interests German *Volkskunde*.⁵⁴ Late nineteenth-century anthropology in Germany found, in the studies of folk cultures, a local primitive able to provide a manifestation of early man analogous to the “primitives” from the new world colonies which fuelled the studies of their French counterparts. These folklore studies continued the twofold introspection toward spirit and soul over practice and fact, and a preference for German topics; their emphasis on rural homelands reflects the longevity of Romantic interest in the countryside as the locus of the nation’s roots.⁵⁵ Hemberg wrote in 1950, in his magisterial survey of the Kabeiroi, that the most apt folkloric comparisons were not the traditions of modern Greece, but the Germanic dwarves.⁵⁶ Blinkenberg, Kern, and Friedlander’s articles on the *daimones* in the great German Classical encyclopaedias of the nineteenth century, Pauly-Wissowa and Roschers, helped ensure the perpetuation of the hypothesis into the mid-twentieth century and beyond.⁵⁷

Romantic foundations, epistemological debates, and scientific methodology converged on Samothrace in nineteenth-century Germany. Schelling’s essay on the mysteries indexes the extent to which the resulting conversations sought to connect contemporary Germany and ancient Greece, both spiritually and scientifically. The hypotheses which emerged reflect the roots of *Volkskunde* and a drive for nationalistic self-identity. The longevity of the hypothesis for metal-making, Indo-European dwarves is as extraordinary as their distance from historical, archaeological, and epigraphic evidence. It is an indication of the extent to which, as Burkert notes, the data from the island challenge the

52 Liebert 1976, 98, 143; Glasenapp 1943; Haussig 1984, 82, 128–29, 200–1.

53 Grimm 1875, 380, 415–50.

54 On German *Volkskunde* and archaeology, see Trigger 2006, 214–15, 235–41.

55 Gingrich 2005, 76.

56 Hemberg 1950, 19–20.

57 Preller, Robert and Kern 1894, 1.2:848–50, 858–59, 861; Wilamowitz 1895, 241–44; Bloch 1897, 2536–40; Malten 1912, 256–60; 1913, 336–37; Blinkenberg 1915; Friedlander 1916; Kern 1917; Herter 1934; Hemberg 1950, 349–51.

formation of coherent models for the rites.⁵⁸ This brief exploration of those models suggests that the value of these models for the rites must weigh the incoherence of the data against the scholarly purposes the data were made to serve in Germany, connected to the emergence of anthropology as a discipline. The culture of scholarship is as much a part of the models as the ancient data themselves. The lesson repeats—but within a very different context—in France of the late nineteenth century, where Samothrace again provided a response to contemporary national needs.

From the Nike to the Commune: Samothrace in Paris

In 1863, the Nike of Samothrace landed in Paris, and J. P. Rossignol, Professor of Greek Literature at the College de France, published his massive work, *Les Métaux dans l'Antiquité: Origines religieuses de la Métallurgie, ou les dieux de la Samothrace représentés comme métallurges d'après l'histoire et la géographie*.⁵⁹ His thesis has become as axiomatic among models for the rites as the Nike is emblematic of the island. Rossignol proposed that metallurgy was to Samothrace what wheat was to Eleusis or wine to the rites of Dionysus: the celebration of an economically and culturally vital technology.⁶⁰ His thesis reflects the place for social evolutionary models, developed by Tylor in Britain and Morgan in America, in anthropology in nineteenth-century France. French theorists in this century sought to build a general science of man which would envelope human physical, intellectual, and “moral” nature in a single analytic framework, an “epistemologically integrated science of the human body and mind.”⁶¹ A role for metallurgy in social evolution had been identified as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when European explorers returned from expeditions with the tools and clothing of the people they encountered.⁶² The similarities between these products and prehistoric European remains suggested analogies between the cultures of ancient Europe and the modern primitives who, with time, would reach a level of complexity equal to that of the explorers themselves. Metallurgy was one of the most significant indices of cultural evolution: it was a dangerous and specialized skill, involving multiple steps from mining to refining and shaping of the finished products,

58 Burkert 1993.

59 Hamiaux 2001; Rossignol 1863; cf. Bataillard 1880.

60 Rossignol 1863, 4.

61 Williams 1983, 8.

62 Trigger 2006, 92–97.

which produced goods of the highest economic and symbolic value. Antoine de Jussieu, 1686–1758, compared European stone tools and ethnographic specimens from New France and the Caribbean, and concluded “the people of France, Germany and other Northern countries ... but for the discovery of iron would have much resemblance to the savages of today.”⁶³ Lewis Henry Morgan, focusing on the indigenous cultures of North America, wrote in 1877 that iron smelting was as significant a step in cultural and economic evolution as animal domestication.⁶⁴ The potential to differentiate human cultures based on their levels of technological sophistication translated into the anthropological museums of the second half of the century.⁶⁵ In Denmark, Thomsen’s three age system, from stone to bronze to iron, articulated most clearly the technological evolutionism in which iron represented the triumphant advent of modern man.

Rossignol, a classicist, found in the metallurgical *daimones* of Samothrace a link between the ancient Mediterranean and one of the questions pursued by his anthropological contemporaries. Both intellectual goals and institutional structures separated the two fields at the time. The materialist approach to human nature, pursued by anatomists, biologists and others around Broca, lay far from Rossignol’s interests. An institutional divide separated the classicist from the anthropologists as well: Rossignol wrote from a university post, while his anthropological counterparts were seeking to establish the theoretical and organizational foundations of an independent anthropological science.⁶⁶ Their efforts were played out in learned societies, where cultural evolutionism was combined with anticlerical sentiment and left-wing politics, countering the conservatism shared by the Second Empire, the Third Republic, and the Catholic church.⁶⁷ Rossignol distanced his work from this anti-clericism. He wrote that he would rely on both God and science in his investigation: history was his guarantee, and geography would be his guide. His thesis, however, affirmed the models of human progress which were antithetical to the contemporary church and made the rites of Samothrace a mythic, mystic, ritual affirmation of those principles. His argument ultimately coheres with the social activism of the learned societies: he granted the contemporary ironworkers the *gravitas* of ancient counterparts and the numinous authority of a mystery cult. The social, economic, and visual context of ironworkers in

63 Quoted in Trigger 2006, 94.

64 Morgan 1878, 39.

65 Stocking 1985.

66 Williams 1985.

67 Hammond 1980.

Paris cast this aspect of Rossignol's Samothrace in high relief, and suggest that the activism of the anthropologists may have shaped his study as much as the Romantic landscapes and evolutionary paradigms with which he begins.

On Rossignol's Samothrace, landscape, metallurgy, and ritual drama converge in the island's mythical *daimones*. Behind his thesis is the Romantic tradition of myth and the landscape, which had its first voice in Herder.⁶⁸ Herder saw infinite God in nature; Fichte confirmed the world as a creation of ego; the true and primordial meaning of the landscape lay in the symbols, emotions and allegories the Romantic viewer perceived in it.⁶⁹ Fichte wrote that the world must be romanticized to uncover its original meaning. The *daimones* of Samothrace, divine embodiments of human intention, answered this summons for scholars before Rossignol. The metal-making *daimones* associated with Samothrace could be associated with geographically specific loci: the Idaian Daktyloi came from Mt. Ida on Crete or at Troy; the Rhodian Telchines appear on the Asia Minor *peraia* as well as on the island; the Kabeiroi could be linked to mountains in Asia Minor and Phrygia.⁷⁰ These data could be paired with geological evidence for ancient mining and ore deposits, so that the *daimones* provided a simultaneous embodiment of human imagination, divine power, and the industries which exploited the wealth hidden inside the earth—itself a *topos*, as noted above, for Romantic speculation. The Daktyloi on Crete and Cyprus, and the Telchines on Rhodes, were symbols of the centrality of mining and metallurgy to those islands.⁷¹ The existence of Kabeiroi on Samothrace was seen as evidence for a metallurgical industry on the island which did not materialize in archaeological form.

Rossignol noted that this relationship between *daimones* and the landscape fell short of explaining the collection of divinities on Samothrace. While all of the island's *daimones* had primary locations away from Samothrace, none of them remained exclusively in those places. Even the Telchines, aggressive autochthonous protectors of Rhodian territory, were associated with many sites, all of which were metallurgical centres. Rossignol argued that these multiple locations mapped significant ports in the ancient metallurgical trade routes, which carried traders and specialists from one town to another. Samothrace was the only place, however, where all of these divinities came together. Their function there went beyond the symbolism of local ores, ethnic identity, or regional economies. There the *daimones* enabled a celebration

68 Lincoln 1999, 53.

69 von Simson 1942.

70 Hemberg 1950, 126; Beekes 2004, 473, 475.

71 Hoeck 1823, 1:359; Engels 1841, 194–96; Heeren 1838.

of the metallurgical skills which were universally central in the evolution of human society. Rossignol classified the difference among the *daimones* as distinctions in the stages of metallurgical production: the Daktyloi discovered mining; Kabeiroi did the work of the smithy; the Kouretes and Korybantes, associated with the weapons the others produce, demonstrated the military and ritual use of the finished products; and the Telchines produced images of men and gods, the highest artistic achievement. Together, they told the metallurgical story of mankind with a precision appropriate to its centrality in human history. Samothrace celebrated the technology through which every nation advanced according to the universal laws of cultural evolution.

This technology also provided the key metaphor for the rites, in a ritual drama in which the death of a brother became the birth of iron. Rossignol found evidence for this in a proverb recorded by Zenobius, fragments of Sophocles, and a scholiast to Nikander's *Theriaka*. Zenobius reported that the proverb, *κέλμις ἐν σιδήρῳ*, *kelmis en sidero*, was used to compare difficult personalities to iron.⁷² Kelmis offended the Great Mother in some unspecified way. As punishment, his brothers confined him deep beneath Mount Ida, where he metamorphized into the iron that embodied his unyielding personality. Rossignol noted the parallel between this story and Clement of Alexandria's claim that the heart of the Samothracian mysteries was a tale of two brothers who murdered a third, buried him, and then celebrated their crime.⁷³ Clement's Christian agenda prevented his revelation of iron as the key to Samothrace: this would have associated the rites with a cultural advancement of great power, and as a Christian apologist his task was to dismiss the rituals as confusion and degeneracy. Rossignol proposed, however, that the mysteries indeed celebrated the invention of iron and the Daktyloi, as smiths and *goetes*, were its priests. His reconstruction of the myth has had a long life in anthropologically informed approaches to the island. An Indo-European perspective, proposed by Roussel in 1905, frames the myth as an account of metals generated from the body of a slain god, a story which serves the social purpose of connecting kings to mineral wealth. A Durkheimian perspective, proposed by Gernet in 1932, derives the significance of the rites from their

72 Zen. 4.80; Soph. fr. 335, Nauck; Walker 1921, 32; [Plut.] *Proverbia* 1254.

73 Clement identified the divine brothers as Kabeiroi, Kouretes or Korybantes; Ephorus, however, identified the Daktyloi with the Samothracian mysteries, and they were often equated to Kouretes. Clement of Alexandria, *Protreptikos* 2.15; Ephorus *BNJ* 70.104; Strabo 10.3.22; 7, fr. 50; 10.3.7; Paus. 5.7.6; Scholia Aratus 33; Diod. Sic. 5.65; *PMG* 985; Hippol. *Haer.* 5.7.3.

origin in itinerant prehistoric metallurgical guilds.⁷⁴ These guilds themselves were buried in prehistory and irrecoverable: the lack of material evidence for them on the island itself did not diminish the value of the argument. The mystery rites of historical times had developed out of the ancient initiatory rites of these groups: the rites ensured social cohesion within the guilds, and so the progress of all human society.

Stocking has characterized nineteenth-century anthropology as a reformer's science in England and a radical reformer's discipline in France.⁷⁵ Rossignol's focus on the metallurgy of the *daimones* encourages us to consider the context of Paris at the end of the nineteenth century, in which metallurgists, especially iron workers, wielded substantial political and social power, and their productions were reshaping the civic landscape. The Labour movement emerged in the 1860s after a decade of repression under Louis Bonaparte. The movement was segmented along trade lines; the two most cohesive craft communities were metalworking and construction.⁷⁶ The metalworking trade had expanded dramatically under the Second Empire and experienced internal change as a result. Iron was in demand for railroads, construction, and steam-driven machinery in textile and sugar industries. Metallurgical plants, particularly in the northern industrial regions of Alsace and Lorraine, grew rapidly. Foundries and machine factories occupied space in the suburbs of Paris, and the two largest engineering and machine building plants were inside the city.⁷⁷ Specialization within these workshops had increased dramatically by the 1860s. Machines were now designed by specialists, and construction was transformed into independent, reproducible tasks. The production of raw metal, however, retained its archaic character well past the turn of the century. Training was a matter of experience, and the successful smelting of iron ores in particular, given their wide range of composition, demanded long apprenticeship.⁷⁸ Ironworkers had especially rich associational lives: 71% of the iron founders lived in only four districts, in contrast to machine builders, who were scattered around the city.⁷⁹ In 1864, Louis Bonaparte made strikes legal, within certain limitations. Within months serious strikes were held by bookbinders, armchair makers, iron founders, copper founders, bronze workers, zinc workers and others. In many of these, the workers founded trade-specific

74 Roussel 1905; Gernet 1932, 77–82.

75 Stocking 1991, 125; Hammond 1980.

76 Gould 1993; Hanagan 1980; Landes 1968; Tilley 1986; Traugott 1985.

77 Clapham 1968; Price 1987.

78 Gould 1993, 736; Vial 1967.

79 Shorter and Tilly 1974; Hanagan 1980; Sewell 1980; Aminzade 1981.

fraternal societies.⁸⁰ The ironworkers organized the largest and the first strike in the capital 1864; many of those protesting were specialized workers. The power of these craft communities to impede capitalist development was directly proportional to the specialization of skills required for their art.

Iron was reshaping the physical as well as the social environment of Paris—it was the chosen material for the elegant Second Empire style, a re-imagining of the city on explicitly Hellenic lines.⁸¹ Iron was both exceptionally strong and eminently functional. Its capacity for mass production and prefabrication meant that the vocabulary thus created could be widely diffused and easily recognized. Iron and glass became the vocabulary of public architecture and imperial vision. Iron structural elements enabled Haussman's rebuilding, which changed Paris from a Medieval warren of streets into a modern city. Labrouste's iron and glass reading rooms in the *Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève* (1838–50) and *Bibliothèque nationale* (1859–75) used cast iron to create new definitions of public space and the celebration of knowledge.⁸² Iron and glass formed the aesthetic basis of the great railway stations, including the *Gare du Nord*, designed by Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, constructed 1861–65. In 1889, the *Tour Eiffel* was built as the entrance to the 1889 World's Fair, in which displays celebrated advances in ironworking and in the understanding of electricity—two topics which contemporary scholars brought to the Samothracian mysteries.⁸³ The vehemence of contemporary criticisms of the tower measure the semantic weight of the material as well as its design.⁸⁴

Evolutionary models were among the most important strategies for anthropologists seeking social justice in this context.⁸⁵ Abel Hovelacque (1843–1896), member of the *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, argued that anthropology's task was to assist the forward movement of human culture by revealing the crudity and militarism, deceptive conceptions of the gods, suppression of the poor, and cults of authority which lingered in modern culture as remnants of its barbaric origin.⁸⁶ Mortillet constructed models of linear historical progression, based on fossil remains, archaeological evidence, geological and palaeoarchaeological finds, to demonstrate that evolution was the law of both physical and cultural changes. Progress was the inevitable course

80 Gould 1993, 734.

81 Benjamin 1969.

82 Trachtenberg and Hyman 2003, 478.

83 de Matos 2004.

84 Fauvel 1996.

85 Hammond 1980; Stocking 1991, 125.

86 Hammond 1980, 126.

of mankind and a powerful argument against the monarchists.⁸⁷ Charles Letourneau used his medical training to produce “combat articles” in which he demonstrated the commonality of man and animal, the evolution of the species, and with it the evolution of religion—from which a more evolved society would eventually be free. The truth of his evolutionary scheme was ultimately justice.⁸⁸ Primitive cultures had proven valuable tools in the development of these models.⁸⁹ An evolutionary model which focused on metallurgy would by definition, however, be challenged on the basis of ethnological comparanda since primitive races were defined by their lack of metallurgical technology. Rossignol’s study was able to provide ethnographic comparanda that were both ancient in time but sophisticated in nature, and so bridge the divide between the quest for comparanda and the need to respond to metallurgical workers. Analogous comparanda were found in the French studies of medieval guilds and metallurgical lore which flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Daubree rediscovered the *Bergbuchlein* in 1890, and Sebillet produced a monumental study of public works, including mining, among all cultures and peoples in 1894.⁹⁰ These brought to the public view a rich range of information from sixteenth-century texts about metallurgical arts. The *Bergbuchlein* was written between 1505 and 1520, Biringuccio wrote the *Pirrotechnia* in 1540, and Agricola wrote *Bermannus* and *De Re Metallica*, the latter appearing posthumously in 1555. The books claimed as their purpose the transmission of practical knowledge about metallurgy. Darmstaedter notes the high skill and increasing difficulty of mining in the sixteenth century and suggests that the books emerged to meet these needs.⁹¹ Gille has suggested that they represent an attempt to affirm the validity of emerging professional groups by crystallizing in written form the oral traditions from the medieval guilds that were on the verge of disappearing.⁹² For Parisians of the late nineteenth century, these data affirmed the medieval roots of the guilds which were re-emerging as a form of worker’s organization. In their accounts of ancient superstitions among metallurgical specialists, they appealed to emerging folklore studies, which sought to preserve such traditions in the face of increasing industrialization. They parallel Rossignol in affirming a connection between metallurgists and initiation: *Bergbuchlein* is written in dialogic form,

87 Hammond 1980, 122n36.

88 Letourneau 1865; Stocking 1964.

89 Williams 1985; Blanckaert 1988; Harvey 1983; Williams 1983, 29–74.

90 Daubrée 1890, 379–392, 441–452; Sebillet 1894, 395.

91 Darmstaedter 1926.

92 Benoit and Cailleaux 1987; Gille 1968.

as a conversation between young Knappius, a generic “miner,” and Daniel, the mining expert. And they dissolve the distance between contemporary European and ancient Mediterranean metallurgists. This was ultimately consistent with evolutionary models, according to which the technology of making metal brought culture—any culture—into the highest evolutionary stratum. Rossignol enrolled Samothrace among the European comparanda which affirmed the social power of the workers who toiled in mines, worked in factories, and brought Paris into the modern era, an accomplishment which reflects the activist spirit of his anthropological contemporaries.

Conclusion

Anthropological lenses on Samothrace yield a range of frameworks as diverse as the mythic and material record is diminished by time. German and French researchers share a commitment to science, an approach to the Greeks as models for emulation, and a deep responsiveness to their own intellectual and political milieus. Schelling affirms, in the rites, the transcendence of spirit which reflects Romantic anthropology and the metallurgical dwarves of German cultural identity. Rossignol's *daimones* reflect the technological evolution of mankind, and the worker's organizations of nineteenth-century Paris. The models are as long lived as they are historically untenable. If we take them as case studies of the intersection of classics and anthropology, they cast down a gauntlet: what is the hoped for outcome of such ventures? The answer is certainly not *histoire evenementielle*: they reflect their nineteenth-century milieu as much as Samothrace. Precisely because the Greeks were approached as mirrors of their best European selves, the investigators were able to use the myths of the island as tools for thinking about their own worlds and responding to pressing concerns—the *Bildung* of the Romantics and the social activism of Paris.

It is in the uses of myth that these nineteenth-century thinkers most approach the experience of the ancient rites. The initiates who travelled to Samothrace sailed on a sea of myth as well as water; this sea of hyper-abundant gods and narratives distinguishes the Samothracian mysteries from those of Eleusis. While Eleusinian narratives emphasize a single tale of Demeter and Kore, Samothracian traditions offer places for Dardanus, Cadmus, Electra, Cybele, and Myrrina the Amazon queen, as well as Lares, Penates, and Castor and Pollux.⁹³ Strabo complained about the confusion of gods and *daimones* on

93 References collected in Lewis 1958.

the island and sought to reduce them to a common function.⁹⁴ For nineteenth-century investigators, the metallurgical *daimones* proved that the rites focused on cultural evolution and technological invention. Samothracian promises of safety at sea as the reward for initiation suggests the celebration of another technology.⁹⁵ And a comic voice from the third century BCE offers one of the most evocative pieces of evidence that myths could be used, on Samothrace, to contemplate the evolution of man. The writer is Athenion, who produced a play titled *The Samothracians*, preserved in part in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*.⁹⁶ Here we read the speech of a cook, parodying the accounts of human evolution as presented in Democritus, Epicurus and others. Samothrace's contribution to the upward evolution of mankind was the discovery of the culinary arts, specifically the delicate use of seasonings, which lured men to eat animals instead of each other. Before this invention, men were bestial (*theriodous*)⁹⁷ and cannibals (*allelophagoi*).

The discovery of cooking was an ancient trope in evolutionary schema, and cannibalism a shorthand for primitive barbarity.⁹⁸ The pyrotechnology of fire and food may have functioned as a comic parody for the pyrotechnology of the island's *daimones*. More significant is that Samothrace here, in a comic voice from the Hellenistic age, is shown celebrating the technologies which enabled human cultural evolution. Horden and Purcel have noted the extent to which the mysteries of Eleusis and of Dionysus mystified the technologies of agriculture and viticulture.⁹⁹ The dominance of soteriological models for the mysteries has tended to limit our vision of the use of these cultural technologies as key metaphors in ritual contexts. The nineteenth-century approach to the island's myths as tools for thinking about contemporary social concerns directs us precisely to these practices—and may thereby bring us much closer to the ancient *mentalité* than does the hypercritical rejection of the *daimones* from the site. That difference in approach highlights the distance between investigator and object, and makes the *Forschungsgeschichte* a fundamental place for new anthropological investigations to begin.

94 Strabo 10.3.19–21.

95 Lewis 1958, 102–115.

96 Ath. 14.80, 660e–661d; *PCG* 4.13–16; Dohm 1964, 169–73, 204.

97 The same adjective is used by Democritus (68 B 5.1; para. 8.1) and Critias (Vorsokr. 88 B 25, v.1 f.) and comparable to Lucretius' "*more ferarum*" used to describe early men (Lucr. 5.931).

98 Nippel 2014; McGowan 1994; Arens 1979; Goldman 1999; Turner 1999; Obeyesekere 2005; Hughes 1991. Hall 1989: 53; Hook 2005.

99 Horden and Purcell 2000, 425–27, 436.

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Arboreal Animists: The (Ab)use of Roman Sacred Trees in Early Anthropology

Ailsa Hunt

In *The natural history of Wiltshire: written between 1656 and 1691*, the antiquarian John Aubrey reflects sadly on the recent “disafforestations” which have denuded the county of oaks.¹ Driving home the horror of this practice he observes:

When an oake is felling, before it falles, it gives a kind of shreikes or groanes, that may be heard a mile off, as it were the genius of the oake lamenting. E. Wyld, Esq. hath heard it severall times. This gave the occasion of that expression in Ovid’s *Metamorph. Lib. VIII. fab. II* about Erisichthon’s felling of the oake sacred to Ceres:—‘*gemitumque dedit decidua quercus*’.²

As if by reflex, Aubrey turns to the Roman concept of a *genius* and to a passage from Ovid to flesh out his claims about the nature of tree felling. Certainly, he offers no comment on the way he has here temporarily conflated seventeenth-century Wiltshire and Augustan Rome. The eighteenth-century antiquarian William Stukeley also displays this impulse to illustrate through the classics, weaving classical texts into accounts of the local English landscape and its sites of interest. Writing of the Royal Oak in which Charles II hid to escape the Roundheads, he notes that the famous tree is now enclosed by a brick wall, “of which we may say, as *Ovid* did of that before the *augustan* palace, *mediamque tuebere quercum*.”³ Brought up as they were on a solid diet of classical, as well as biblical texts, these scholars instinctively turn to the ancient world as a way of communicating ideas about their own culture.

The nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars on whom this book shines a spotlight, often labelled anthropologists, ethnologists, or

1 Aubrey 1847, 53. Unpublished on Aubrey’s death, the work was first published by John Britton in 1847.

2 Aubrey 1847, 53.

3 Stukeley 1724, 57, quoting *Ov. Met.* 1.563.

comparativists, were not only raised on the classics but were also heavily influenced by earlier antiquarians. Like their antiquarian predecessors, the comparativists (as I will call them) instinctively turned to the classical world to elucidate cultures under their scrutiny. Hargrave Jennings, for example, sounds very like Aubrey with his “genius of the oake” when, writing in 1890, he too borrows a term from Roman cult to articulate how he understands the Bengali custom of honouring *lares rurales*.⁴ Yet, despite the similarities with Aubrey’s approach, we are clearly now far from Wiltshire. Nor is it just a widened geographical interest that distinguishes the antiquarian and the comparativist use of classical material. The comparativists pioneered a new approach to analysing human culture in which classical material took on a new and privileged role as a tool for cultural enquiry.

The comparativists were fascinated by the origins of human culture, seeking to understand both how various cultural practices emerged and how those practices developed, from their first beginnings down to the present day.⁵ The narratives of development these scholars constructed were often not culture-specific, but rather of universal application; human development was understood to follow essentially the same path in all times and places. As Lewis Farnell put it in 1905 in *The Evolution of Religion*, comparativist study meant that he and his colleagues were

slowly and surely arriving at inductive conclusions concerning the similarity of development through which the higher and lower races have passed and are passing; the solidarity of the human family appears stronger than we might have supposed.⁶

Farnell’s choice of evolutionary narrative also reflects a tendency among his comparativist colleagues to prioritize the study of religious practices; the question of how religion began, in particular, piqued the interest of many.⁷ Rival theories jostled for dominance: animism (with Edward Tylor as figurehead),

4 Jennings 1890, 15.

5 With the publication of *The Origin of Species* (1859), Darwinian evolutionary theories offered weighty justification of this developing methodological approach (see Gellner 1999, 11).

6 Farnell 1905, 11–12.

7 Ackerman also notes with gentle irony that readers of comprehensive comparativist studies of human development, such as Tylor’s *Primitive Culture*, were likely to have “found the chapters on the origins and development of religion and mythology rather more absorbing than those on, say, agriculture and smelting” (2008, 145).

totemism (first promoted by John McLennan and Andrew Lang), and ancestor worship (with Herbert Spencer a famous proponent) were leading contenders. This focus of interest around the question of religious beginnings and development was, however, not without problems, given that these scholars—who were predominantly British and German—all worked in overtly Christian (indeed Protestant) societies.⁸ The implication of comparativist study of religion for Christianity—that it, like any other religion, was the product of natural evolutionary processes and not a divine revelation to man—was so unthinkable in this cultural context that much effort was expended on framing comparativism's results in the most positive light possible. Often Christianity was presented as the ultimate goal of this evolutionary process. To borrow the striking words of Edward Caird, a driving motivation for these comparativist scholars was to discover “how the religious consciousness itself advances from one form to another, from the lowest awe of the supernatural which we can call a religion, to the highest form of Christian faith.”⁹

In their efforts to paint as detailed a picture as possible of the earliest stages of religious thinking and practice, the comparativists relied on three strands of information. First, they turned to ancient cultures familiar to them through their comprehensive knowledge of biblical and classical texts; thus frequent references were made to Israelite, Greek, and Roman religious practices.¹⁰ Other ancient societies were also brought into the picture as the new discipline developed; Max Müller, for example, made the study of Vedic Indian culture fashionable and facilitated this with translations and editions of key Sanskrit texts. Such chronologically distant cultures were valued for revealing humans at an early stage of development, but scholars of comparative religion did not always have to look so far back in time to access what they saw as “primitive” religious thinking and behaviour. Deemed just as useful were ethnographic accounts of contemporary “savage” or “primitive” religious cultures, be they those of the Solomon Islands, North America, or India. The number, knowledge, and accessibility of such cultures had only increased as the British and other European empires stretched across the world. Ethnographic accounts

8 For two examples of the Christianocentric nature of these scholars' world, consider how Philpot makes easy reference to “the Book that we all know best” (1897, 3) or Farnell to “our national religion” (1905, 21).

9 Caird 1893, 176.

10 Some scholars tended to downplay the primitive nature of Israelite culture in comparison with that of Greece and Rome, for example, Frazer 1926, 16. After all, “Israelite religion” could be seen as the forerunner of Christianity and, hence, according to these Christianocentric scholars, could not be *too* primitive.

were lauded for offering first-hand insights into the workings of the primitive religious mind: the concept of *mana*, which Robert Codrington observed to be central to Polynesian religious culture, and which was enthusiastically taken up by the animist camp, provides one example to which we will soon return. Closer to home, even the civilized cultures of Christian Europe were said to have something to offer, with remnants of primitive religious behaviour and thinking understood to survive in folklore and local traditions.¹¹ Negotiating their unease at finding primitive religious thinking on their doorstep (practices such as Maypole dancing, which had previously seemed harmless traditional fun, now looked rather different), scholars of comparative religion relied on European folklore and were indebted to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antiquarians who devotedly rooted out and recorded such local traditions. Aubrey's observation on oaks in Wiltshire, for example, is cited two hundred years later by R. J. King in his article "Sacred Trees and Flowers," by Grant Allen in *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, and by James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough*.¹²

Comparativists, therefore, gathered snapshots of primitive religious culture by reading Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, antiquarian accounts of Wiltshire traditions, and ethnographic reports of Bengali customs. We might imagine it was rather overwhelming to be faced with this array of seemingly unconnected material, taken from what—to us at least—seem like very different disciplines. Yet the academic world of the comparativists was not strongly marked by disciplines; it was "interdisciplinary" in a far more radical sense than we tend to use the word, in that no strict subject boundaries were felt or observed.¹³ Moreover, comparativist eyes were trained to spot shared features and recurring ideas which patterned chronologically and geographically distant cultures; these points of contact then allowed them to arrange material from Wiltshire, Rome, and Bengal into tidy universal narratives of religious development. In this chapter, I single out sacred trees as one of the recurring features that the comparativists believed almost omnipresent in societies where religion was at an early stage of development. Henry Barlow sums up the *communis opinio* when he observes that "most nations, if not all, would appear, at some time or other, to have had a sacred tree."¹⁴ Or, as John Lubbock put it, worship of

11 As Lang said, "Folklore represents, in the midst of a civilised race, the savage ideas out of which civilisation has been evolved" (1884, 25). Comparativist scholars were often deeply Eurocentric, see, for example, Frazer 1911, 22.

12 King 1863, 223, Allen 1897, 139, Frazer 1911, 18. For an overview of how antiquarian studies developed into comparativist scholarship, see Stocking 1987, 53–6.

13 See Young 1985, 127; Phillips 2011, 12, on this interdisciplinary culture.

14 Barlow 1866, 97.

sacred trees is “one among many illustrations that the human mind, in its upward progress, everywhere passes through the same or very similar phases.”¹⁵ Replicating this nineteenth-century enthusiasm for sacred trees, from now on our focus will be exclusively arboreal.

As we explore the role sacred trees played in comparativist scholarship, we find scholars fleshing out their discussion with arboreal snapshots from a wide range of cultures, illustrating the notorious comprehensiveness with which comparativists collected examples—perhaps the most well-known fact about Frazer’s twelve-volume *Golden Bough* is its formidable length.¹⁶ Considering the implication of such monumental works that “the more examples, the better” (to put it crudely), we might expect that no one culture would be privileged over another in comparativist scholarship. Yet, when it comes to comparativist engagement with sacred trees, time and time again Roman material comes to the fore. What made Rome such a valued source of examples for understanding tree worship?

Sacred Trees and Primitive Religion

Before we can begin to answer why ancient Rome was so valued in the study of sacred trees, however, we must first address why comparativists valued *all* sacred trees as a tell-tale sign of a primitive phase of religion.¹⁷ This arboreal obsession stems from the fact that, among the nineteenth-century theories competing to explain how religion first emerged, animism was a powerful and fashionable contender. The “animists” argued that when primitive people observed the living, natural environment in which they found themselves, they presumed that features of it must be “animated” or pervaded by some kind of divine power or spirit. This led, for example, to the worship of the sun, or closer to home, springs and trees. (Understandably enough, this animistic worship was also referred to as “nature worship.”)¹⁸ Very influential in shaping the animist theory was Edward Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* (1871). Tylor famously proclaimed animism, or “belief in spiritual beings,” as a “minimum definition of Religion,” explaining that all religions develop from the mistaken belief that features of the natural world are animated by such

15 Lubbock 1870, 206.

16 Beard examines a variety of critical and popular responses to the “monstrously prolix” *Golden Bough* (1992, 206).

17 For full treatment of this question, see Hunt 2016, 29–49.

18 Frazer, for example, treats animism and nature worship as one and the same when defining the latter as “the worship of natural phenomena conceived as animated” (1926, 17).

spiritual beings.¹⁹ Understood to bolster the animist theory was Codrington's renowned ethnographic report on the savages of Melanesia. Published in 1891, this report emphasized the *mana* of the Melanesians, defined by Codrington as "a power or influence" which revealed itself "in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses."²⁰ Ironically, Codrington himself did not see Melanesian religion as animistic, but he was less than successful in convincing the academic world of the difference between *mana* and one of Tylor's "spiritual beings."²¹ The concept of *mana* was placed on a pedestal as a first-hand insight into primitive animistic responses to the natural world.²²

The tree, with its ability to grow and wither, to bud and flower and shed its leaves, to change the colour of those leaves and to move its branches in the wind was—or so these scholars claimed—an obvious suspect for being interpreted in an animistic way. Both Thiselton-Dyer and King wax lyrical on this theme:

The fact that plants, in common with man and the lower animals, possess the phenomenon of life and death, naturally suggested in primitive times the notion of their having a similar kind of existence ... On this account a personality was ascribed to the products of the vegetable kingdom, survivals of which are still of frequent occurrence at the present day. It was partly this conception which invested trees with that mystic or sacred character whereby they were regarded with a superstitious fear which found expression in sundry acts of sacrifice and worship.²³

For the origin ... of tree 'worship', properly so called, we must go back to that primaevial period into which comparative mythology has of late afforded us such remarkable glimpses ... when every part of creation seemed to be endowed with a strange and conscious vitality. When rocks and mountains, the most apparently lifeless and unchanging of the

¹⁹ Tylor 1871, 1:383. For one example of Tylor's influence, consider Lang's deferential insistence that his arguments "are strung on the thread of Mr Tylor's truly learned and accurate book, 'Primitive Culture'" (1898, 47).

²⁰ Codrington 1891, 119.

²¹ See Stocking 1995, 43. Frazer, for example, turns straight to the Polynesians when looking for an example of an animistic culture (1926, 5).

²² Smith (2002, 198–201) provides a potted history of scholarly thinking about *mana*: "a complex, century-long drama in which a word was transformed into an incarnate power only to be reduced to a word again" (2002, 199).

²³ Thiselton-Dyer 1889, 1–2.

world's features, were thus regarded and were personified in common language, it would have been wonderful if the more life-like plains—the great rivers that fertilised, and the trees with their changing growth and waving branches that clothed them—should have been disregarded and unhonoured.²⁴

The vitality of trees quickly led to the primitive belief, or so these scholars argued, that trees were the “home, haunt or embodiment of a spiritual essence.”²⁵ When Tylor urged the readers of *Primitive Culture* that “the spirits of the tree and grove ... deserve our study for their illustrations of man's primitive animistic theory of nature,” his call did not go unheeded.²⁶ Comparativist scholarship overflows with examples of animistic conceptions of trees. Consider but a handful of claims from Frazer, Ouseley, Philpot, Thiselton Dyer and Frazer:

The Wanika of Eastern Africa fancy that every tree, and especially every coco-nut tree, has its spirit.²⁷

Every aged tree is regarded in the Philippine islands as a kind of divinity.²⁸

The tulasi or holy basil of India is believed by the Hindus to be pervaded by the divinity of Vishnu and of his wife Lakshmi, and hence is venerated as a god.²⁹

Instances of these tree spirits lie thickly scattered throughout the folklore of most countries ... Ovid tells a beautiful story of Erisichthon's impious attack on the grove of Ceres.³⁰

The negro woodman cuts down certain trees in fear of the anger of their inhabiting demons ... when he is giving the first cuts to the great asorin-tree, and its indwelling spirit comes out to chase him, he cunningly drops palm-oil on the ground, and makes his escape while the spirit is licking it up.³¹

24 King 1863, 211–212.

25 Philpot 1897, 1.

26 Tylor 1871, 2:196.

27 Frazer 1911, 12.

28 Ouseley 1819, 393.

29 Philpot 1897, 43.

30 Thiselton Dyer 1889, 5–6.

31 Tylor 1871, 2:197.

As the final two examples illustrate, the comparativists often emphasized a primitive fear of cutting down trees as proof that those trees were believed to be animated by spirits. Frazer summed up this thinking: "if trees are animate, they are necessarily sensitive and the cutting of them down becomes a delicate surgical operation," further humanizing these animated trees through his use of language more at home in the discussion of human medical practices than of tree-felling.³² Local traditions about trees which bled when cut became an expected *topos* of such discussion in comparativist scholarship.³³

Another *topos* within animistic explanations of tree worship took the discussion away somewhat from "tree spirits" and blurred with another significant theory about the origin of religion: this was the idea, famously promoted by Spencer, that religion arose from the instinct to worship dead ancestors. The souls of the dead, some argued, were believed to enter trees (the presence of trees on graves frequently emphasized) and thus tree worship began as another form of ancestor worship. Allen was a particularly vigorous proponent of this view, presenting tree worship as an "aberrant and highly specialised offshoot" of ancestor worship.³⁴ Allen was unusual in making ancestor worship the foundational explanation for tree worship, but many comparativists mentioned the belief that the souls of the dead could enter trees as one among many reasons to imagine a tree as animated. Thus Frazer introduces a subsection of his chapter on tree spirits with the observation that "sometimes it is the souls of the dead which are believed to animate trees," following this up with examples like the belief in "Corea" that "women who expire in childbed invariably take up their abode in trees."³⁵

Whether taking an orthodox animist stance or following Allen's hybrid ancestor-cum-tree worship theory, once comparativist scholars had ascertained how tree worship first began, the next priority was to account for how it developed. The comparativists drew up evolutionary narratives of tree worship which claimed that peoples at their most primitive stage conceive of trees and their spirits as entirely assimilated, treating trees "as direct objects of worship."³⁶ This conclusion led to theological statements which, from our

32 Frazer 1911, 18. I am grateful to Emily Varto for this latter observation.

33 For discussion of the fear of tree felling and bleeding trees, see, for example, Frazer 1911, 18–20; Mannhardt 1875–77, 28–31, 34–8; Tylor 1871, 2:196–201.

34 Allen 1892, 125. Allen sums up his "main idea" as follows: "sacred trees and tree-gods owe their sanctity to having grown in the first place on the tumulus or barrow of the deified ancestor" (1892, XII).

35 Frazer 1911, 29, 31.

36 King 1863, 212.

perspective, often seem outrageously bold and over-simplified. Consider Ouseley's observation that "every tribe of the Galla nation in Abyssinia worships avowedly as a God, the Wanzey tree."³⁷ After such primitive conceptions, the next step was to conceive of the spirit as rather more separate from the tree, living in it but not materially assimilated with it, and to direct worship towards the spirit rather than the tree. This advance was often explained by comparing the relationship of a soul to a human body with that of a lodger to a house. Thus Frazer observes that "the tree is regarded, sometimes as the body, sometimes as merely the house of the tree-spirit."³⁸ Tylor proposes a slightly more subtle distinction, but still relying on the soul-body analogy: he distinguishes a tree "inhabited, like a man, by its own proper life or soul, or as possessed, like a fetish, by some other spirit which has entered it and uses it for a body."³⁹ Although both conceptions of the tree were primitive, the earliest of the two, in which the tree *itself* was said to be worshipped, found itself on the receiving end of particularly mocking criticism: adjectives like "crude" were applied to what was framed as a comical misunderstanding of a material object.⁴⁰ That the comparativists saw tree worship as a mistake primarily about matter is also revealed through the language of their repeated insistence that primitive peoples treat trees as "*direct objects of worship*" (my italics).⁴¹

In short, the comparativists valued sacred trees as a quintessentially primitive phenomenon, providing precious insight into early animistic understandings of the natural world and how this led to the deluded worship of material objects. Moreover, comparativists valued sacred trees because they were thought to be prevalent in almost all primitive cultures: they could be observed not only—to use two examples given above—in the beliefs of the Wanika about coconut trees, but also in Ovid's account of the tree-hacker Erysichthon. As it happens, however, we are far more likely to meet Erysichthon in a comparativist analysis of tree worship than we are the Wanika. Roman material, as we will soon see, played a disproportionate role in these scholars' accounts of the significance of tree worship. Why should this be the case? Comparativists emphasized tree worship as primitive, deludedly materialistic, and animistic, and these same scholars likewise viewed Roman religion as quintessentially primitive, materialistic and animistic.

37 Ouseley 1819, 394.

38 Frazer 1911, 40.

39 Tylor 1871, 2:196.

40 E.g., Farnell 1905, 10; Philpot 1897, 33.

41 King 1863, 212. Cf. Tylor on "direct and absolute tree-worship" (1871, 2:202) as echoed by Philpot (1897, 21–22) and Robertson-Smith on "the direct cult of trees" (1889, 187).

Quintessentially Primitive, Quintessentially Materialistic

Comparativists largely agreed that it was, to borrow Lang's words, surprisingly easy "to bring savage ritual to the surface of classical religion."⁴² Indeed, the discovery of a stratum of "savage practice" within the classical cultures which educated society had long revered for its production of poems like the *Iliad* or orators like Cicero, was an intense and unpleasant shock. This shock was felt most acutely, however, concerning Greek culture. Farnell's language nicely captures this sense of disillusionment: it felt like "the sacred edifice of Hellenism was attacked" when comparative scholars recognized traces of animal, stone and tree worship in Greek religion.⁴³ The Cambridge Ritualist school, which flourished in the early twentieth century, would embrace with open arms the idea that primitive religious thinking lay at the heart of Greek religion and that, by stripping back layers of secondary myth, they could recover the original ritual and primitive kernel of Greek religious practices.⁴⁴ Many scholars, however, were more hesitant than the outspoken Ritualists, and often tried to shield Greek culture from the implication that deep down it was essentially as primitive as the culture of Bengal or the Solomon Islands. Thus Lang insists that while there are fundamental similarities between Greek and other cultures at an early stage of development, the difference between them is clear when we observe "the effect of the Greek genius at work on rude material."⁴⁵ To give one example of the kind of defence mounted, Keightley observes that in Norway and Sweden the echo of the human voice among hills is ascribed to mocking dwarves, while, he comments approvingly, "the more elegant fancy of Greece gave birth to Echo."⁴⁶

These scholarly objectors to Greek primitivism did not, however, come running to the defence of Roman culture. In part, this is due to a marked preference for Hellenism among classicists of this period; the culture of Rome tended to find itself characterized as derivative of and inferior to the "pure

42 Lang 1884, 12. Cf. Tylor 1871, 2:199.

43 Farnell 1905, 10. Ackerman notes that resistance to the implication of comparativist research that Greek and Roman culture were fundamentally primitive too was "nowhere ... more acute than in relation to the study of ancient religion and mythology" (2008, 145).

44 For a concise discussion of this movement, and the questions and intellectual priorities driving it, see Ackerman 2008, 150–55.

45 Lang 1884, 26. Cf. Waring 1870, 21.

46 Keightley 1828, 6.

genius” of Greek culture.⁴⁷ Yet, when it came to thinking specifically about the religion of Greece and Rome, there was more to it. For these scholars were not only openly Christianocentric, but also Protestant-centric: Roman religion was viewed as a religion “of the rudest and most primitive type” because it was also thought of as a close relative of Catholicism.⁴⁸ We might expect there to be little reason for discussion of Catholicism within accounts of the earliest days of primitive cultures, but in fact Catholic practices had a weighty presence in comparativist scholarship. This was due, in Tylor’s words, to the belief in Catholicism’s “maintenance of rites more naturally belonging to barbaric culture.”⁴⁹ Or to take the words of two other comparativists:

As the Church of Rome, the mother of all our modern churches, adopted the great mass of Pagan ceremonial in her worship, so in her theological fancies she embodied much more than was worth retaining in the ancient mythological thought, except for astute purposes of superstition.⁵⁰

We owe the survival of many pagan customs largely to the Roman Church, whose settled policy it was to adapt the old festal rites to the purposes of the new faith, and to divert its rude converts from the riotous festivities of their unconverted friends by offering them the more orderly rejoicings of a Christian holy day.⁵¹

These comparativists boldly framed Catholicism as a living repository for “pagan” and “barbaric” culture, producing multiple examples (or smaller claims) to back up this larger claim: Catholic use of candles in worship derives from an Egyptian feast of lights in honour of the tree goddess Neith; the practice of placing flowers on graves on the *jour des morts* is “a surviving relic of a very ancient form of Manes-worship”; the Mass is “but an etherealised survival” of the ancient cult of a “slain man-god,” such as Adonis.⁵²

The comparativists tended to write as though their reasons for aligning ancient Roman religion—as opposed to “barbaric culture” in general—with Catholicism were self-explanatory; certainly, we find little justification for it

47 See, for example, Habinek 1998, 15–33 on nineteenth-century Hellenic preferences and their intellectual legacy.

48 Allen 1897, 369. At times this anti-Catholic bias screams from the pages of comparativist works; consider Keary (1882, 504) on Catholicism having some of its roots in hell.

49 Tylor 1871, 2:407.

50 Waring 1870, 37.

51 Philpot 1897, 162.

52 Waring 1870, 12; Allen 1892, 62; Allen 1897, 245.

in their writing. Two factors, however, must have been crucial. First, there is the simple coincidence of location. Roman Catholicism could be framed as the natural inheritor and preserver of Roman pagan practices because the two “religions” shared a city.⁵³ Conyers Middleton, in a confrontational book of 1729 entitled *A letter from Rome, Shewing an Exact Conformity between Popery and Paganism: or, the Religion of the Present Romans to be derived entirely from that of their Heathen Ancestors*, claimed that it was the personal experience of being in Rome which showed him how Catholic practices had been “handed down by an uninterrupted Succession from the *Priests of Old* to the *Priests of New Rome*.”⁵⁴ Arguments like Middleton’s underpinned nineteenth-century comparativist thinking about Catholicism. The second factor is one of the key disagreements between Protestants and Catholics: Protestant teaching encouraged an abhorrence of icons and statues, which it claimed were rife within the Catholic tradition, stereotyping Catholics as idolatrous worshippers of these material objects. Thus it was that—in Protestant eyes—Catholics could be seen as replicating the religious mistakes of primitive peoples, whose animistic understanding of the natural world led them to worship material objects like stones and trees. Criticism of Catholic idolatry and criticism of primitive worship of natural material objects blurred to such a degree that they were often presented as the same thing, as seen in Fergusson’s narrative of religious development:

Anyone who has watched the progress of idolatry must have observed how rapidly minds, at a certain stage of enlightenment, weary of the unseen, and how wittingly they transfer their worship to any tangible or visible object. An image, a temple, a stone or tree may thus become an object of adoration or pilgrimage, and when sanctified by time, the indolence of the human mind too gladly contents itself with any idol which previous generations have been content to venerate.⁵⁵

53 Phillips discusses how Catholicism’s association with the city of Rome helped align Catholicism and paganism (2011, 18). Christianity more broadly defined could also be presented as an inheritor of paganism, as having “taken part at least of its form in Rome” (Allen 1897, 369). For an example of this, see Philpot (1897, 163) on the Saturnalia’s influence on Christmas traditions.

54 Middleton 1729, 13.

55 Fergusson 1868, 2. Evolutionary narratives explaining how tree worship developed into idolatry were popular. See, for example, Barlow (1866, 97) and Boetticher on the tree as “das ursprünglich erste Gottesbild” (1856, 16).

Indeed we see this same blurring in effect on numerous occasions, particularly when the comparativists are discussing tree worship. Ouseley explains how a tree or stump can become “an object of idolatrous worship” and uses the term “tree-idol”; Lubbock writes of a sacred tree in Congo and “the Gentiles adoring it as one of their idols”; Keary calls trees “half-idols.”⁵⁶ A shared language was created to describe the religious actions of both primitive tree-worshipping peoples and contemporary Catholics.

A hugely influential term in this shared language was “fetish.” The idea of fetish worship was often used synonymously with animistic worship, in particular, the lowest, most materialistic stage of animistic worship.⁵⁷ In Tylor’s words, fetishism conveyed “the doctrine of spirits embodied in, or attached to, or conveying influence through, certain material objects.”⁵⁸ Thus the most primitive form of tree worship could be called fetishism: Keary emphasizes its materialistic focus when observing that “the tree fetich was a thing prayed to *of itself*” (my italics).⁵⁹ Use of the term fetish did, however, vary from author to author and we may well sympathize with Robertson-Smith, who branded it “a merely popular term, which conveys no precise idea, but is vaguely supposed to mean something very vague and contemptible.”⁶⁰ Certainly the term’s history provoked debate even during its heyday. De Brosses introduced it in 1760, in his book *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches*, and openly acknowledged that he has extracted a word from its original context, and used it as a term of universal relevance.⁶¹ He adopted the term from some Portuguese sailors who, having observed reverence paid to certain objects by the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, referred to those objects as “feitiços,” a term they also used for their own prayer beads and crosses. Müller was a loud critic of this term’s value, pointing out that the Portuguese only interpreted the practices they saw in this way because “they themselves were fetish-worshippers in a certain sense.”⁶² De Brosses, he argued, took “an unwarrantable liberty” in transferring the context-specific word “fetish” to the many objects which primitive peoples considered

56 Ouseley 1819, 363, 371; Lubbock 1870, 306; Keary 1882, 65.

57 Lang defines fetishism as “the belief in the souls tenanting animate objects” (1898, 160). Müller, however, objects to the blurring of fetishism and animism (1901, 127), while Keary insists on a distinction between fetishism and nature worship (1882, 31).

58 Tylor 1871, 2:132.

59 Keary 1882, 82, making use of an alternative spelling for “fetish.”

60 Robertson-Smith 1889, 192.

61 De Brosses 1760, 10.

62 Müller 1901, 63.

somehow divine, like the trees to which De Broses gave first place in his list of potential fetish objects.⁶³

Müller may have been unfashionably opposed to the term “fetish,” but he shared the tendency with other scholars to present fetishism not only as a form of superstition that Catholics shared with other primitive peoples, but as an inherently Catholic concept. For Müller, fetishism was simply a Catholic idea. Others, like Keary, pointed out that remnants of “fetich belief” are most visible in Catholic practices:

The last faint echoes of this belief are found in the uses of objects such as the *relics* of the Roman Catholics, the very *feitiços* from which the belief has received its name. The bone of the saint, the nail from the true Cross, are fetiches of this sort.⁶⁴

Farnell, too, claimed that we only need to glance at Catholic practices to “recognise the fetichistic value of the sacred objects, relics, crucifixes.”⁶⁵ Finally, fetishism was also presented as the first step on a path towards Catholic idolatry; it was a stage of thought which “passes by an imperceptible gradation into Idolatry,” the organic continuity between the two so strong that idolatry could simply be called “a higher form of fetichism.”⁶⁶ Fetishism, Catholic idolatry and tree worship thus formed a nexus of ideas in the comparativist imagination.

When comparativist scholars turned their focus to Roman religion, a religion they imagined as a close relative of Catholicism, they were predisposed to think of it as both deeply primitive and deeply deluded—indeed fetishistic—in its understanding of material objects. In light of the nexus understood to exist between fetishism, Catholic idolatry and tree worship, the comparativists presumed that Roman culture could not help but be fertile ground for sacred trees.

63 De Broses 1760, 18.

64 Keary 1882, 88.

65 Farnell 1905, 45.

66 Tylor 1871, 2:132; Farnell 1905, 44. Müller again criticizes De Broses for not keeping fetishism and idolatry separate (1901, 65–66), while Keary argues that a Christian venerating an icon is not quite the same as fetishism “however ignorant the Christian may be” (1882, 32).

Quintessentially Animistic

Predictably enough, these scholars did find the primitive, materialistic culture of Rome to be rich in sacred trees. Moreover, these animism-obsessed scholars found that the closer they looked at Roman religious culture, the more Rome seemed to them of fundamental importance for anyone wishing to understand the animistic thinking which led to tree worship. The comparativists' imagination quickly became dominated by Roman "arboreal figures" like Daphne, Erysichthon and Polydorus, all of whom they held up as prime *exempla* of a primitive, animistic understanding of trees.

As Aubrey instinctively fell back on his knowledge of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* when elucidating tree-felling beliefs, so later comparativists made this epic their first point of call when investigating sacred trees in Roman culture. In many ways, this move is rather strange, for scholars of this period also tended to exalt Augustan authors for their literary achievements. Could Ovid's *Metamorphoses* really be a *primitive* poem in their eyes? The answer to this was confident and uniform: Ovid's poetry was far from primitive, but it preserved primitive thinking.⁶⁷ As Tylor put it, "the ethnographic student finds a curious interest in transformation-myths like Ovid's, keeping up as they do vestiges of philosophy of archaic type."⁶⁸ In Philpot's words:

The many folk-tales concerning the conversion of mortals into trees which Ovid has so gracefully elaborated in his *Metamorphoses* ... assume a new importance now that we can trace them back into that old world where tree and man, and indeed all living things, were held to be so near akin ... they demonstrate the survival of very ancient modes of thought among races who had otherwise reached a high degree of civilisation.⁶⁹

Of Ovid's many arboreal metamorphoses, Daphne was a firm favourite. Tylor singles out Daphne and the sisters of Phaethon for preserving this archaic stage of thought.⁷⁰ Thiselton-Dyer makes Daphne a prime example of "the olden heathen mythology" in which every tree was "the abode of a nymph."⁷¹

67 Cf. Fergusson 1868, 18, on how enlightened Augustan authors preserve primitive forms of worship.

68 Tylor 1871, 2:200.

69 Philpot 1897, 77–8.

70 Tylor 1871, 2:200.

71 Thiselton-Dyer 1889, 243.

Philpot too starts with Daphne, before mentioning the transformations of the sisters of Phaeton, Baucis and Philemon, Phyllis, Melus, Lotis, and Attis.⁷²

Such arboreal transformations were also particularly beloved of scholars for whom the belief that the souls of the dead might pass into trees was an important element of their accounts of tree worship. Elaborating on “that common superstition that the souls of the dead have gone to inhabit trees,” Keary turns to the story of Philemon and Baucis, transformed into trees at the moment of their death, also mentioning the story of the “penitent Myrrha,” whose dying wish it was to become a tree.⁷³ Thiselton-Dyer, referencing Keary, extends the list by citing, in addition, Ovid’s stories of the sisters of Phaethon, Daphne, and Syrinx.⁷⁴ Indeed, any of Ovid’s arboreal metamorphoses could be read in this way, and Boetticher even argued that belief in the dead living on in trees was “der verhüllte Sinn” of all Ovid’s arboreal metamorphoses.⁷⁵ However, Virgil’s story of the dead Polydorus, apparently transformed into a shrubby thicket of cornel and myrtle trees, easily eclipsed Ovid’s *exempla* in importance.⁷⁶ As Aeneas tried to uproot a tree to decorate an altar, he caused the transformed Polydorus agonizing pain: black blood and gore flowed from the tree, and a groan came from the tumulus before Polydorus announced his identity.⁷⁷ The haunting figure of Polydorus was never far from comparativist minds, distracting Frazer, for example, from his discussion of South Slavonian tree beliefs:

A tree that grows on a grave is regarded by the South Slavonian peasant as a sort of fetish. Whoever breaks a twig from it hurts the soul of the dead, but gains thereby a magic wand, since the soul embodied in the twig will be at his service. This reminds us of the story of Polydorus in Virgil.⁷⁸

Allen, in particular, for whom belief in souls of the dead inhabiting trees was not simply an aspect of tree worship, but the fundamental mistake from which tree worship arose, makes much of the story of Polydorus. He parades

⁷² Philpot 1897, 77.

⁷³ Keary 1882, 66–7.

⁷⁴ Thiselton-Dyer 1889, 10–11.

⁷⁵ Boetticher 1856, 254.

⁷⁶ Virgil’s depiction of Polydorus’ transformed state is ambiguous; he refers to bushes (*Aen.* 3.23), a wood (*Aen.* 3.24) and two individual trees (*Aen.* 3.27, 31).

⁷⁷ *Aen.* 3.22–48.

⁷⁸ Frazer 1911, 32–33.

this “typical and highly illustrative myth” as *the* example through which he introduces his theory of tree worship.⁷⁹

Allen then segues straight into “similar stories of bleeding or speaking trees,” quoting first Aubrey on the “shrieking oake.”⁸⁰ He was not alone in leaning on the bloody aspect of Virgil’s story of Polydorus. For the comparativists found great support in Roman mythology for their claim that prohibitions against cutting trees and stories of bleeding trees were proof of animistic beliefs, as discussed above. Thus when Mannhardt argues that the motif of a bleeding tree indicates a tree understood as “beseelt,” this thought leads him directly into recounting the story of Polydorus.⁸¹ Promoting the same argument, Philpot too immediately refers the reader to the story of Polydorus and also that of Erysichthon, as related by Ovid.⁸² For Ovid’s account of how the vicious Erysichthon attacked an oak inhabited by a nymph takes much of its poignancy from his emphasis on the trembling, pale, and bleeding tree.⁸³ Grimm even privileges this “beautiful story of Erysichthon’s impious attack,” in a discussion focused on cautionary tales against tree felling in *German* folklore: just like Polydorus, and the nymph whom Erysichthon attacks, from dryads and hamadryads too “a cry of anguish escapes ... when the cruel axe comes near.”⁸⁴

These rather shadowy figures from Greco-Roman mythology were also held up as quintessentially animistic conceptions; as Philpot put it, in the hamadryads “the idea of an actual tree-soul is most clearly exemplified.”⁸⁵ These dryads and hamadryads even became a shared point of cultural reference with which to make sense of tree spirits in other cultures. In the late

79 Allen 1892, 34.

80 Allen 1892, 34.

81 Mannhardt 1875–77, 20–21.

82 Philpot 1897, 62.

83 *Met.* 8.741–779

84 Grimm 1835 (1883), 653. The idea that Roman trees bled became such a commonplace that no more than a sweeping gesture to the transformation of Atys into a pine and Syrinx into a reed allowed Dalyell to observe, as a universal rule relating to all plants, that “sanguinary streams have escaped from their wounds” (1834, 405).

85 Philpot 1897, 58. Cf. Boetticher 1856, 255. Strengthening this idea of hamadryads as “tree souls,” scholars emphasized that etymologically their name meant “spirits whose life was bound up with the life of the tree” (Philpot 1897, 58). See Serv. *Ecl.* 10.62 and the scholiast on Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.479, who notes that hamadryads are born and die ἅμα ταῖς ἑρυσὶ (with their trees). Often framed as an originally Greek idea, the significant presence of dryads and hamadryads in Roman culture was also emphasized. See Hunt 2016, 190–196, for discussion of the way these shadowy arboreal figures are presented in literature of the Greco-Roman world.

eighteenth century, Marsden noted in his history of Sumatra (as later repeated by Lubbock) how the locals

Superstitiously believe that certain trees, particularly those of a venerable appearance, (as an old jawee jawee or banyan tree) are the residence, or rather the material frame of spirits of the woods: an opinion which exactly answers to the idea entertained by the ancients, of the *dryades* and *hamadryades*.⁸⁶

Similarly, Aubrey tells a story (as later repeated by Thiselton-Dyer) of a man who felled an aged oak at Norwood in Surrey and shortly afterwards broke his leg, “as if the *Hamadryades* had resolved to take an ample Revenge for the Injury done to that sacred and venerable Oak.”⁸⁷ As well as being taken as a blueprint for understanding the tree spirits of Sumatra and Surrey, dryads and hamadryads were also valued for the way they paralleled tree spirits in Germanic culture, famed for its animistic conceptions of trees. Both Grimm and Mannhardt had made Germanic arboreal folklore an indispensable quarry of information for comparativist investigation into sacred trees. In his two-volume *Wald- und Feldkulte* (1875–1877), Mannhardt paired German belief in “die Baumseele” (the subject of volume one’s opening chapter) with the Greco-Roman dryads (tackled in volume two’s opening chapter). With the two volumes structured to mirror each other, German concepts of a tree-soul and Greco-Roman dryads were framed as *Doppelgangers*: “Dryaden sind die typischen Gegenbilder der deutscher Baumgeistern.”⁸⁸ Twinning dryads with Mannhardt’s famous Baumgeistern consolidated their status as perfect illustrations of animistic tree worship.

Be it dryads and hamadryads, Daphne, Polydorus, or Erysichthon, Roman “arboreal figures” loomed large in the comparativist imagination. It is thanks to these figures that Roman culture was treated like a microcosm for the comparativists’ universal portrait of primitive, animistic tree worship. Making reference to figures like Daphne or the hamadryads was not simply about dipping into a pool of classical knowledge which was the preserve of the educated elite; instead, Roman examples were valued and foregrounded on the understanding that they embodied the *essence* of primitive beliefs in other cultures, providing “classic” *exempla*—or to use Tylor’s phrase “perfect

86 Marsden 1783, 253; Lubbock 1870, 283.

87 Aubrey 1718, 34; Thiselton-Dyer 1889, 49.

88 Mannhardt 1875–77, 212. Both Philpot (1897, 55, 67) and Thiselton-Dyer (1889, 89) reveal a debt to Mannhardt’s attention to the dryads.

types”—of particular aspects of animistic tree worship.⁸⁹ In principle, all primitive cultures made a valuable contribution to the comparativists' tapestry of examples through which they illustrated a particular phenomenon or idea; yet, when the comparativists turned to sacred trees, those rooted in Roman culture enjoyed a privileged position of influence.

An Arboreal Legacy

The comparativists came to Roman religion expecting to find animistic tree worship, and they found it. The comparativist tendency to construct universal rules outlining human behaviour, and then to produce examples to fit those rules, however, has been a central element in criticism of its approaches.⁹⁰ Certainly, it is hard to ignore the injustices done to the Roman arboreal examples considered above. The comparativists simply *assumed* that Roman thinkers saw dryads and hamadryads, or the tree-nymph attacked by Erysichthon, or metamorphosed girls like Daphne, as spirits pervading a tree like a soul does a human; no engagement with a text was felt necessary to prove this. Likewise, they did no analysis of Virgil's lines to show why we should think that worship of Polydorus' soul underlies the meaning of this passage. In their eagerness to build up examples, the comparativists did not stop to consider the genre of the texts they cite, to wonder why Ovid and Virgil so dominate their chosen examples, or to assess the Polydorus episode within the wider arboreal imagery of the *Aeneid*. In short, the detail and the nuance of literature and context are missing. In framing these Roman examples as universal paradigms of animistic thinking, the comparativists forgot to think of them as examples of *Roman* thinking, expressed through Latin literature and making their initial impact in a Roman context. The comparativists were champions of Roman sacred trees, but in a manner so disengaged from the Roman source material that their legacy today—namely a substantial impact on current scholarship on Roman religion—is both ironic and unfortunate.

Few comparativists would have felt Roman religion worthy of detailed, focused study, although they largely had the education and language skills to do so. The comparativists were classicists (in our terms) by training, but rarely in vocation. Yet, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, things began to change. The comparativists' "interdisciplinary" world began to splinter off into

89 Tylor 1871, 2:207.

90 For the scholarly turn against the comparativist method see, for example, Gellner 1999, 16–22; Lessa and Vogt 1972, 2–5.

more defined disciplines, and the study of Roman religion established itself as a discipline in its own right, as seen with the emergence of books like Frank Granger's *The Worship of the Romans* (1895) and Jesse Carter's *The Religion of Numa* (1906).⁹¹ Naturally enough, these new scholars of Roman religion were deeply influenced by their comparativist colleagues. Although their focus was now on one culture alone, many still valued the comparativist method. Evidence for Roman religion was felt to be particularly patchy in its early stages and, as Granger bluntly put it, "where one set of records is imperfect, we can sometimes fill up the gaps by reference to the fuller accounts of another set."⁹² Comparativist scholarship and early scholarship on Roman religion thus worked hand in hand.

It is, then, of little surprise that sacred trees played a defining and disproportionate role in the first scholarly portraits of Roman religion, and particularly of its earliest days. Infected by the comparativist obsession with both animism and sacred trees, and prompted by the privileged position Roman sacred trees had enjoyed in comparativist scholarship, early scholars of Roman religion felt that such trees were a key characteristic of Roman religion. Yet, when it came to illustrating this, the old favourites—Polydorus, Erysichthon, Daphne, the dryads and hamadryads—were rapidly losing ground.⁹³ Instead, those scholars devoting themselves to the study of Roman religion in its own right jumped on the concept of *numen*, which had been rather overlooked by the comparativists. Taken to mean something like "divine power," early scholars of Roman religion idolized this word, holding it up as a synonym for the Melanesians' *mana* and as the "characteristic conception of Roman religion": here was definitive proof that Roman religion was, at heart, an animistic religion.⁹⁴ It was by then orthodox that animistic religious cultures had sacred trees, and two passages

91 There was also an increasing scholarly tendency to switch between research projects which we would think of as either classical or comparativist: Farnell, as we have seen, wrote on comparativist religion, but is more famous for *The Cults of the Greek States* (1896–1909).

92 Granger 1895, 129.

93 This is not to say they were absent: for Baddeley, hamadryads sum up his animistic understanding of Roman tree worship (1905, 101–2).

94 Altheim 1938, 192. On the conflation of *numen* and *mana*, see, for example, Bailey 1932, 133; Wagenvoort 1947, 75; Rose 1948, 13. For detailed discussion of the role of *numen* in the history of scholarship on Roman religion, see Hunt 2016, 58–61, 177–84. For exploration of what *numen* might mean when associated specifically with trees, see Hunt 2016, 184–90.

that connected this newly favoured word *numen* with trees were cited *ad nauseam*: Ovid's *Fasti* where, on observing a dark wood under the Aventine, Ovid writes, you might say "there's a *numen* within";⁹⁵ and Pliny's *Natural History*, where Pliny notes, *inter alia*, that in the old days trees were the temples of *numina*.⁹⁶ Only lightly and minorly cited by the comparativists, these passages became extremely influential in the early scholarship of Roman religion.⁹⁷

In this early scholarship, Roman religion was nothing if not an animistic religion. The effects of this animist enthusiasm were resounding, and the word *numen* has enjoyed a long reign: in 1948, the first and foundational chapter of Herbert Rose's *Ancient Roman Religion* was simply called "Numen." Today the idea that animism holds the interpretative key to Roman religion has largely fallen out of favour, yet animistic thinking still has a significant, if now somewhat muted, influence on scholarship on Roman religion.⁹⁸ In particular, animist thinking reappears when scholars engage with Roman religious responses to features of the natural environment. In keeping with tradition, arboreal examples are favoured with references made to the "numinous" qualities of trees, their "divine aura," or their "frisson of the supernatural," which prompted Roman thinkers to consider trees sacred.⁹⁹ This is the old animist orthodoxy in updated language. Thus the comparativist obsession with animism and sacred trees, inherited by and channelled through the early scholars of Roman religion, has an impact on scholarship today. For all the professed distance between contemporary classical scholarship and that of the nineteenth-century comparativists, our approach to Roman religion—in particular, when it intersects with the natural environment—has an organic connection with comparativist thinking about sacred trees. Not only did the comparativists' (ab)use of Roman religion and arboreal figures extracted from classical texts heavily shape their own scholarship, but their obsession with Roman sacred trees also fundamentally shaped the classical study of Roman religion.

95 Ov. *Fast.* 3.295–6. The passage is cited by Granger 1895, 95; Bailey 1932, 43, 133; Pfister 1937, 1279; Wagenvoort 1947, 79; Rose 1948, 15.

96 Plin. *HN* 12.3. The passage is cited by Granger 1895, 96; Pfister 1937, 1280; Wagenvoort 1947, 79.

97 Ouseley (1819, 393) cites the Pliny passage, and Jennings (1890, 28) cites both, mentioning his reliance on Ouseley, but without precise reference.

98 A turning point was Dumézil's 1966 attack on the use of *numen* by scholars like Rose.

99 Lowe 2011, 102; Rives 2007, 91; Turcan 2000, 39, respectively.

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Colourblind: The Use of Greek Colour Terminology in Cultural Linguistics in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Melissa Funke

Deciphering colour terms from early Greek poetry (that is, from poetry prior to the fifth century) is one of Classical philology's longest-standing conundrums. What should a modern reader make of Homer's "wine-dark" (οἶνοψ) cattle or his "violet" (ιοετδής) sea? How is it that only a select few of the hues from Newton's seven-colour ROYGBIV spectrum are represented in early Greek poetry?¹ Through its ongoing assessment and comparison of languages from all over the world representing a wide variety of cultures, cultural linguistics offers a means of addressing these difficult questions. In its earlier stages, however, scholars in this sub-field of anthropology turned to the work of Classical philologists on Greek colour terms, using Homeric Greek in particular as one of their comparanda.

This chapter does not attempt to answer the thorny questions posed above, which are likely to inspire a great deal of scholarship for years to come, but rather will trace the beginnings of colour term study by both philologists and anthropologists. If it is true that, as Turner claims, "anthropology presents perhaps the most tangled case of philological influence on a humanistic discipline,"² then the history of the study of colour terms provides a clear narrative of how the roots of these disciplines grew entangled with each other. I relate this story beginning with nineteenth-century work on Homer which linked colour terminology to the ancient Greeks' visual capabilities and situating it in the context of the scientific work of Sir Isaac Newton on colour, John Dalton on

1 In this chapter, I use "hue" to refer to what we may understand as one of the colours from Newton's spectrum (e.g., yellow or green). The terminology I employ in discussing colour in its broadest sense is based primarily on the well-established and standardized Munsell system, which divides perception of colour into three aspects: hue (the colours of the spectrum), value (how light or dark a colour is), and chroma (the purity of a colour). Archaeologists, for example, commonly use the Munsell system in assessing the colour of soil and pottery. See Munsell 1905 and 1912 for Munsell's original descriptions.

2 Turner 2014, 329.

colour-blindness, and Charles Darwin on evolution. I then take up the origins of cultural linguistics, tracing how this process parallels the development of anthropology itself, before moving on to the work of early twentieth-century philologists on colour. In the final section of this chapter, I return to mid-century cultural linguistics, specifically Brent Berlin and Paul Kay's inclusion of Homeric Greek in their seminal *Basic Color Terms* in 1969. I address why this dialect of ancient Greek has had such influence in the history of the study of colour terms and how varying trends in cultural linguistics have affected its use by both anthropologists and classicists. Much like classical studies, the study of colour terms is fundamentally interdisciplinary, currently requiring the participation of, according to Dedrick and Paramei, "psychophysicists and physiologists, cognitive psychologists and linguists, ethnographers and ethnoscientists, computer scientists and philosophers and neuropsychologists and ophthalmologists and literary scholars (who must) take each other seriously, on pain of mistake or irrelevance."³ This chapter maps out where the work of classicists and anthropologists on colour terms has intersected and diverged to examine the enduring influence of Homeric Greek on this field of study.

Nineteenth-Century Work on Colour Terminology

In 1704, Sir Isaac Newton published his *Opticks*, an investigation into the nature of light in which he described the separation of light into a seven-hued spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet). Because his theories contradicted the prevailing particle theory of light,⁴ they ignited a great deal of controversy and motivated many scholars to bring forward their own theories of light and colour.⁵ The most famous of these was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose 1810 *Zur Farbenlehre* (*Theory of Colours*) is a sweeping work on the scientific and artistic aspects of colour and human visual perception. In his earlier work *Beiträge zur Optik* (*Contributions to Optics*) as well as in the preface to *Zur Farbenlehre*, Goethe framed his work as a response to the laws laid out

3 Dedrick and Paramei 2007, XI.

4 The particle theory of light, most famously espoused by Pierre Gassendi, holds that light is composed of small particles travelling in a straight line and has its basis in Epicurean atomism.

5 Newton first presented much of the experimentation that he describes in *Opticks* to the Royal Academy in 1672, which initiated enough controversy over his theories that he delayed their publication until the death of one his major opponents, Robert Hooke.

by Newton.⁶ However, where Newton was interested in the physical properties of colour and light, Goethe added and gave equal weight to the physiological aspect of colour, that is, its perception.⁷ This focus on perception introduced the idea of colour-blindness to Goethe's work, which in turn unlocked difficult questions related to perception and its subjectivity that Goethe had struggled to answer in his earlier work.⁸ In a letter written in 1798, he mentioned art created by a colour-blind man; in a letter written on the following day, he sought assistance from Friedrich Schiller in formulating his understanding of colour according to his research.⁹

Scientific knowledge and the study of colour-blindness were in early stages: just as Goethe was engaging with this matter, John Dalton was publishing the first significant scientific inquiry into colour-blindness, *Extraordinary Facts Relating to the Vision of Colours*, based in part on his own experience with colour-blindness.¹⁰ In it, Dalton explained that he was only able to see two or three hues: yellow and blue, and with more subtle distinctions, yellow, blue, and purple.¹¹ In 1802, Thomas Young followed this work with further investigation into the cause of colour-blindness.¹² The recognition of colour-blindness was increasing in the scientific community. Although he did not acknowledge the work of Dalton and Young directly, Goethe was likely aware of this trend in scientific study. (He discusses the work of many contemporary scientists from England in his second volume.) He incorporated colour-blindness into *Zur Farbenlehre* in his discussion of two individuals who could not see blue, a condition he refers to as "acyanoblepsia."¹³ Knowledge of colour-blindness as a phenomenon, combined with Goethe's recognition of the Greek tendency to emphasize light and dark

6 Goethe 1791, par. 10–12 and 1810, 1:XV.

7 Although he recognized that perception was fundamental to the study of colour, prior to Goethe beginning the research that would appear in *Zur Farbenlehre*, this appears to have posed an unsolvable problem for him (Sepper 1988, 91).

8 Goethe's solution was to break down the process of colour-perception into three contributing categories: physiological (the eye's perception), physical (the medium through which the image passes), and chemical (the perceived object). Working through these categories comprises the first segment of *Zur Farbenlehre*.

9 Sepper 1988, 92.

10 Colour-blindness in all its manifestations was originally known as daltonism, which now refers only to deuteranopia (green blindness). Dalton first presented his findings in October 1794.

11 Dalton 1798, 31.

12 Young first presented his work, "On the Theory of Light and Colours," in November 1801.

13 Goethe 1810, 1:45.

(Munsell's "value") over hue,¹⁴ may have led to his famous conclusion that the ancient Greeks had defective vision, a tempting explanation for the riddle of the Homeric "wine-coloured" cattle and the "violet" sea.

William Gladstone, the four-time Victorian-era British prime minister¹⁵ and a trained classicist, held Goethe's work on antiquity in the highest esteem.¹⁶ Having read *Zur Farbenlehre*, he too took up the question of the Greeks' visual perception in his exhaustive 1858 work on Homer, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*.¹⁷ In his opening remarks on Homeric colour terminology, Gladstone claimed that the ability to discern colours is "less and less mature" going backwards in human history.¹⁸ Gladstone argued this on the basis of "signs of immaturity" he identified in Homer's use of colour:¹⁹ the "paucity of his colours" (i.e., of Munsell's hues); the use of a single term for different hues; colour terms applied to one object that contradict one another (presumably *vis à vis* hue); the prevalence of black and white over other hues; and the lack of colour terms where they might be "confidently [expected]."²⁰ After dismissing the idea that Homer may have employed poetic license in his use of colour terms (with reference to the "high effect" of Shakespeare),²¹ Gladstone arrived at two conclusions. First, the ancient Greeks' environment did not provide sufficient colour-related stimulation (e.g., green foliage turned brown quickly in the Mediterranean sun). Second, the lack of stimulation resulted in reduced ability to see colour.²² In this, the influence of the Newtonian spectrum on Gladstone's thinking is evident: he sought hue and evaluated these terms based on what he could not find.

That Gladstone used Homer as his proof to suggest "a slow ... growth in knowledge and in the training of the human organ"²³ is not surprising, given

¹⁴ Goethe 1810, 2:54.

¹⁵ Gladstone held this office from 1868–74, 1880–85, for five months in 1886 and from 1892–94.

¹⁶ According to Gladstone, Goethe alone was able to "tread regions bordering upon that of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with the consciousness of a master's power" (1858, 615).

¹⁷ Gladstone refers to Goethe's section on the Aristotelian *Περὶ χρωμάτων* (1858, 493).

¹⁸ He also comments that Britons have "some special aptitude in this respect" (1858, 457).

¹⁹ Gladstone was not alone in using the analogy of infancy and maturity to describe the development of early Greeks. George Grote, for example, wrote of a historical progression from infancy (prehistoric Greece) to adulthood (Classical Greece) in his multi-volume *History of Greece*, published in 1872 (See Varto, this volume).

²⁰ Gladstone 1858, 458.

²¹ Gladstone 1858, 485.

²² Gladstone 1858, 487–8. Like Goethe, Gladstone takes these colour terms as expressions of value rather than hue (1858, 489).

²³ Gladstone 1858, 496.

the flurry of interest in evolutionary theory occurring in the middle of the nineteenth century. Charles Darwin released his *On the Origin of Species* the year after Gladstone published his work on Homer, but theories of evolution (commonly referred to as transmutation at the time) were already current and already had a long intellectual history.²⁴ The general pattern of these theories was a progression towards increasing complexity, with clear hierarchies of complexity established in a variety of fields. Discussion of change in a species and exploration of models for how this might occur had been common among natural philosophers at least as early as the seventeenth century, when thinkers, like René Descartes, proposed a variety of theories from the material to the spiritual. Subsequently, historians in the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, followed by ethnologists in the late nineteenth century, adapted the concept of progressivism to explain the development of human societies.²⁵ Many ethnologists, James Cowles Prichard prime among them, connected this progressivism to the physical development of humans.²⁶ By the time Darwin's seminal work was published, the entwined concepts of progression, hierarchy, and physiological development were orthodoxies, all of which are reflected in Gladstone's explanation of the development of the Greeks' colour-sense.

True comparative work on Greek colour-terminology began with Lazarus Geiger's 1871 *Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschheit* (known in English as *Contributions to the History of the Development of the Human Race*). Opening with a discourse on the development of language and the challenges and rewards of reading a foreign language, Geiger then discussed the common ancestor of German and Sanskrit, referring to it as Indo-German (but never giving it the name Indo-European).²⁷ Geiger, a great believer in evolutionary theory who applied it broadly, linked the evolution of language to the evolution

24 In a 1797 lecture, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck introduced the first widely-disseminated theory of biological evolution toward complexity (later known as Lamarckism), which held that an organism was able to pass on characteristics acquired during its own lifetime to its offspring. Robert Chambers' *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), one of the theories most popular with the general public, also dealt with the trend toward complexity in organisms. Chambers published it anonymously to avoid the controversy that his theories would ignite.

25 Chapman 2013, 599.

26 Prichard's 1813 work, *Researches Into the Physical History of Mankind*, centres on this connection.

27 Geiger 1871, 17–18. Despite the fact that Indo-European was already a current term at this point, introduced by Thomas Young in 1813, Geiger devotes a chapter to proving that Germany was the home of the people who spoke this ancestral language.

of intellectual capacity.²⁸ When he turned to colour, he used the development of colour perception to parallel the development of all sensation.²⁹

It was at this point that Geiger embarked upon his comparative task, beginning with investigating the lack of terms for blue in the *Rigveda*, the *Zend Avesta*, and the poetry of Homer.³⁰ Like Goethe and Gladstone before him, Geiger noted that older colour terms refer to gradations of light and dark,³¹ then addressed the order in which green, red, and yellow are acquired, pointing out that the pattern holds for all three ancient languages he examines. Based on this, Geiger concluded that colour-sense evolved steadily, from what he terms “colour-ideas” (*Farbenbegriffen*) based on the night, the dawn, and the sun (black, red, and white).³²

In response to Geiger’s recognition that the physiological aspects of his theory were nearly impossible to study,³³ Hugo Magnus, an ophthalmologist, attempted to link philology with physiology using evolutionary theory in a series of studies beginning in 1877.³⁴ His interest in this undertaking was partly anthropological, based on his curiosity over the comparison of the Greeks of Homer’s time to the “uncivilized” peoples of his own. Magnus’ work thus began the combined philological/anthropological/physiological study of colour terms that has come to dominate this field while remaining faithful to the cultural-evolutionary premise of Gladstone and Geiger. To untangle this intellectual knot, Magnus proposed two levels of visual capacity: the basic ability to perceive light and the more evolved ability to distinguish between colours.³⁵ While maintaining largely the same order of colour acquisition in Greek that his predecessors had laid out,³⁶ Magnus set aside hue (and the dominance of Newton’s spectrum) as his primary means of investigation, instead adopting luminosity (*Lichreichthum*)³⁷ and attributing colour acquisition to the evolution of the retina.

28 Geiger 1871, 20. Geiger’s remarks on the state of society in the opening pages of his book point to this broad application.

29 Geiger 1871, 46.

30 Geiger 1871, 46–48. The *Zend Avesta* is a collection of Zoroastrian sacred texts written in Avestan, a language that comes from what is now east Iran and is preserved only in this collection of texts.

31 Geiger 1871, 48. In his section on words for blue, Geiger brings up Goethe’s discussion of acyanoblepsia in *Zur Farbenlehre* (1871, 52).

32 Geiger 1871, 58.

33 Geiger 1871, 48.

34 Magnus (1881, 171) specifically aligned himself with Darwin’s theory.

35 Magnus 1877, 4.

36 Red replaced white as the brightest hue (Magnus 1877, 11).

37 Magnus 1877, 45.

In late 1877, Gladstone published an article elaborating on his own theory of Homeric colour-blindness by drawing on the conclusions of both Geiger and Magnus. In it, he touched on *Zur Farbenlehre* and Goethe's emphasis on light and dark in his experimentation with colour, commenting that "the observations of Goethe appear to touch upon the Homeric facts."³⁸ In stressing value over hue in the colour terms of Homer, Gladstone backed away from his earlier claim that the Greeks were colour-blind in the physiological sense, but rather suggested "an education of the eye for colour" that applied to all Greeks of Homer's time.³⁹ Here he quoted Geiger (via Magnus) comparing a dog's sense of smell, which, despite its acuity, does not distinguish between agreeable and offensive smells, to the ancient Greeks' visual ability.⁴⁰ He also pointed out that the words for colour found in Homer are figurative, "not facts but images,"⁴¹ and thus began to distance himself from a theory of pure physiological evolution while moving closer to one of intellectual/linguistic evolution. Gladstone thus marks a major departure from established nineteenth-century trends in historical and ethnological analysis.

Several years later, Magnus also returned to his original work on colour terms and perception. He set out to prove his earlier theory and perhaps respond to the particularly stinging criticism of Grant Allen that he "[argued] *a priori* as to what the sensations of the savage *must be* like; but he [had] taken no pains to inform himself ... what they actually *are* like."⁴² Magnus first quizzed his own students in Germany on their perception of colour, then distributed over sixty of the same questionnaires to missionaries, doctors, and officials throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania with the intent of gathering data from cultures that were not modernized. He thus set the path for future fieldwork by cultural linguists, much as he had drawn physiology into the conversation in 1877.⁴³ Not quite ready to leave his theory of the physiological evolution of the colour-sense behind, in his analysis

38 Gladstone 1877, 388.

39 Gladstone 1877, 367.

40 Gladstone 1877, 368.

41 Gladstone 1877, 386.

42 Allen included Gladstone and Geiger in his opprobrium, suggesting that each of the three scholars "seems to have sat down in his library, consulting the frail linguistic authority [of ancient literature]" (1879, 220). Magnus did not respond directly to Allen's critique of his work, but that he published the results of the questionnaires the year after the appearance of Allen's work suggests that he was aware of it, and his work seems to have been intended as a direct answer to Allen.

43 The tribes consulted and the results of this study are detailed in Magnus 1880.

of the resulting data, Magnus credited external influences with refining different aspects of colour perception. He connected the environment of the speakers of the language to the colour terms they used (in the same vein as Gladstone's claim about the lack of colour in the Mediterranean landscape).⁴⁴ He did, however, begin to unbind linguistic and physiological evolution in his conclusions from this study. He acknowledged, not unlike Gladstone had in 1877, that the tribes he studied had the same colour-sense as "civilized" peoples and that the colour terms of a given language were not bound up in the ability to perceive colour of its speakers.⁴⁵ In 1879, Anton Marty had already disputed the connection between linguistic and physiological evolution based on earlier physiological studies and his study of ancient paintings, ultimately suggesting that the ancient Greeks could see colour just as well as their nineteenth-century European counterparts. Magnus' work, however, produced by a trained ophthalmologist, carried greater scientific *gravitas*. This landmark distinction between cognition and perception, a significant step away from previous progressivist scholarship, came to define the conversation about colour terms and the work of cultural linguists generally.

Anthropology and the Origins of Cultural Linguistics

Cultural linguistics (initially called and still often known as linguistic anthropology),⁴⁶ which draws on both cultural anthropology and cognitive linguistics, seeks to investigate how language is embedded in culture, and how the relationship between the two affects conceptualization. While philologists (especially those engaged in comparative work like Geiger and Magnus) were asking what language revealed about ancient culture, the nascent field of anthropology pushed at the key question of perception, upon which the theories of colourblind ancient Greeks had merely touched. The concern was how the subjective experience of objective phenomena could be studied. This question was first raised in a purely anthropological context by Franz Boas in his 1889 article "On Alternating Sounds," in which he addressed the bias inherent in individual perception. In this article, he contradicted the suggestion by Daniel Garrison Brinton that apparent variations in an aboriginal language were a sign

44 Magnus 1880, 19.

45 Magnus 1880, 34.

46 Gary B. Palmer was the first to give the name cultural linguistics to this sub-field of anthropology (1996, 4). The term is often retroactively applied to work that was originally considered linguistic and/or cognitive anthropology.

of its “primitiveness.”⁴⁷ His article dismantles the concept of “sound-blindness,” as based on linguistic anthropological research; this term was applied to the inability to distinguish between different sounds (on analogy with colour-blindness). It was used much in same way that Goethe, Gladstone, and Geiger had used colour-blindness to prove that the sense under discussion was not fully evolved in certain cultures.⁴⁸

The subjectivity/objectivity contrast found in “On Alternating Sounds,” in turn, was based on ideas Boas explored in an article from 1887. In it he asked:

Is the study of phenomena for their own sake equal in value to the deduction of laws? ... Is the study of a series of phenomena having a merely subjective connection equal in value to researches on the history of those forming an objective unity?⁴⁹

For Boas, individual phenomena were the priority, while the wholes were considered abstractions.⁵⁰ Language provided an ideal means to study individual phenomena, with the caveat that the outside observer keep in mind the historical dynamics of a given culture and the subjectivity of their own perceptions. In this, Boas turned away from the colour studies of the philologists, for whom language was both the means and the end of their work.

While Boas was using questions similar to those first posed by classical philologists in shaping the field of linguistic anthropology (and the discipline of anthropology generally), his work discarded the biological and cultural-evolutionary frameworks that had been influential with Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus. Rather, he refocused the linguistic conversation on individual cultures and their interactions with one another where the philologists had sought a developmental trajectory with a clear teleology.

One of Boas’ students, Edward Sapir, further developed the study of the connections between language and culture, with a particular focus on the influence of cultural perspectives on language development. In his wide-ranging account of the various factors that affect language, Sapir stated that language, based in culture, also has a “drift,” or a tendency to change slowly over time.⁵¹

47 This is on par with the evolutionary concerns of Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus and follows the general trend at the time of studying aboriginal cultures as “primitive.” See Turner 2014, 329, on this trend in the second half of the nineteenth century; Kuper (2005) examines this phenomenon as a whole.

48 Boas 1889, 47.

49 Boas 1887, 139.

50 Lewis 2001, 385.

51 Sapir 1921, 160–61.

Sapir's own student, Benjamin Lee Whorf, subsequently applied the ideas of Boas and Sapir to his work on linguistic relativity (later referred to as the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis"). Whorf proposed that language, in its arrangement and presentation of phenomena, specifically through grammar,⁵² could affect thought and behaviour on the individual and cultural levels, firmly establishing the dividing line between cognition and perception that Magnus had touched upon over seventy years earlier.⁵³

Early Twentieth-Century Scholarship on Greek Colour Terms

During the time that Boas, Sapir, and Whorf were pioneering the study of linguistic anthropology, scholars working on ancient Greek continued to grapple with the issue of Greek colour terminology by moving beyond the poetry of Homer. In 1904, Wolfgang Schultz, trained in philosophy, published his doctoral dissertation, *Das Farbenempfindungssystem der Hellenen* (*The Greeks' System of Colour-Perception*). While acknowledging that he was building on the work of Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus, he expanded his scope beyond poetry to scientific writing, including Aristotle, Plato, Theophrastus, Democritus, and Galen, as well as the lexicographers in his investigation. This entailed work on a greater number of colour terms than his predecessors (since the Greek colour-term lexicon had grown over time) and a sidelong glance at Latin colour terms and their correspondence to those from Greek.⁵⁴ He also added a study of material culture to his literary analysis, as part of a tripartite approach to the question of colour-perception involving psycholinguistic research, review of the literary descriptions of coloured objects, and examination of paint residue on ancient architecture, sculpture, and painting.

Despite employing what was the most comprehensive approach yet, Schultz still concluded that Greek colour-perception was "abnormal," basing this on his claim that there is no explicit term for blue.⁵⁵ This conclusion may be because his work had roots in Magnus' ophthalmological scholarship, particularly *Augenheilkunde der Alten* (*Ophthalmology of the Ancients*), released

⁵² Palmer 1996, 12.

⁵³ Whorf 1956, 174. Current thought on linguistic relativity accounts for two versions of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: the mild form, in which language influences thought, and the strong form, in which language determines thought (Biggam 2012, 18).

⁵⁴ Schultz 1904, 95–96.

⁵⁵ He claimed that all the terms that could mean blue (e.g., *ἀλουργές*) refer back to specific objects and are too easily confused with greenish-blue or violet (Schultz 1904, 185–86).

only three years prior.⁵⁶ At this point, research into Greek colour terms, even with a broader purview, was still thoroughly entangled in teleological nineteenth-century assumptions that had grown out of evolutionary theory. Even if Schultz was no longer claiming that the Greeks were colour-blind in the strictest sense, he had essentially gone no further than diagnosing them with Goethe's acyanoblepsia. Nor was Schultz's work as influential as that of his predecessors, as it offered no significant advances on the work of Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus.⁵⁷ Where anthropologists like Boas had been inspired by the work of philologists to ask broader questions of language and culture generally, classicists had yet to reach beyond the work of twenty years prior.

In the early twentieth century, academic fields, particularly the social sciences, were becoming increasingly specialized and housed separately on university campuses, making work on ancient Greek colour terms more and more a task for classicists only. Anthropologists were beginning to study individual phenomena as such, and comparative philological work of the type that Geiger and Magnus had done went largely by the wayside. Homer was no longer the sole focus of classicists' or philologists' work on colour, and classicists' work was expanding into fields beyond philology, yet the strangeness of Greek colour terminology remained a tantalizing concern. In 1921, Maurice Platnauer, a classicist, attempted to underscore this strangeness, because he felt that "custom [had] staled [colour terms'] surprising character" with phrases like "wine-dark sea" having become "household words."⁵⁸ His work, although not on the scale of that of his predecessors, catalogued colour terms found in authors ranging from Homer to Xenophon and divided them into two categories: "chromatic" (those representing hue) and "achromatic" (those representing value). Because, as had been well-established since Goethe's time, Greek colour terms do not correspond neatly to Newton's spectrum and, as Gladstone noted, can apply to objects of different hues, Platnauer subdivided his "chromatic" terms into groups: yellow-orange-brown, red, purple-blue, and green.⁵⁹ The "achromatic" subdivisions he used were black, white, and grey.⁶⁰ Like Schultz and the

56 This study looked at the ancient ophthalmological concepts and medical practices of the Egyptians, Jews, Indians, Greeks, and Romans.

57 Schultz's later involvement with the National Socialist party, his academic advancement at the University of Munich due to his Nazi connections, and his deeply flawed work on Aryan culture most certainly also had a negative impact on the willingness of scholars to engage with his earlier research.

58 Platnauer 1921, 153.

59 Platnauer 1921, 157.

60 Platnauer 1921, 153.

others before him, Platnauer did not find a word that represents a “pure” blue, and he shared their concern that *κυάνεος* (which seems to be the closest to a “pure” blue term by the time of Theophrastus) is not used to describe the sky until well into the fourth century CE.⁶¹

Based on his catalogues of terms, Platnauer came to the important conclusion that many of these words do not apply purely to colour and may not even be entirely visual, thus moving away from Gladstone’s claim that Homer could not have been using these terms figuratively. He also settled on the (standard by that point) emphasis on dark and light, with echoes of Magnus’ interest in luminosity. He credited this to the “brilliant” light in Greece, reiterating the connection that Gladstone made between environment and language.⁶² In his final remarks, Platnauer’s wording indicates that he espoused the teleological model of language development, as he called the colour terms of the Greeks “frankly defective as compared with that of the moderns.”⁶³ Despite casually dropping in the possibility of the Greeks having been colour-blind, he immediately retreated from such a claim (although he did not disavow it) and from a physiological solution to the puzzle of their colour terminology. He suggested instead that hue was of little interest to ancient Greeks.⁶⁴

While many of Platnauer’s conclusions go barely further than those of the Victorian-era philologists and share their teleological emphasis, his division of colour terms into chromatic and achromatic and his inclusion of lustre shows that he had added to their methodology. In this, he seems to have taken on the approach of Boas and his fellow anthropologists, studying Greek on its own terms. Ultimately, he concluded that ancient Greeks valued lustre over hue, a conclusion which privileged cognition over perception alone, mirroring the discussions of Boas, Sapir, and Whorf.

Florence Wallace’s *Color in Homer and Ancient Art*, published in 1927, led the way for the more specialized study of individual terms that has characterized work on this topic from the mid-twentieth century on.⁶⁵ Combining the approaches of Schultz (the use of both literary and material evidence) and of Platnauer (the division of terms), Wallace sought even more nuance from these methodologies. She divided Homer’s use of colour into terms for

61 Platnauer 1921, 161.

62 Platnauer 1921, 162.

63 Platnauer 1921, 162.

64 Platnauer 1921, 162.

65 The most influential study of the last sixty years has been Irwin’s *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (1974), which takes up *χλωρός*, *κυάνεος*, and light/dark contrasts. Most other work deals with individual terms (e.g., Maxwell-Stuart 1981 on *γλαυκός*).

artificial and natural colour, coloured light, illusions of colour (here addressing the eternally-confounding “wine-dark” sea),⁶⁶ value words,⁶⁷ and figurative use of colour. In doing so, she made cognition a fundamental part of her discussion in a way that no philologist before her had done. Her diachronic examination of colour in ancient art began with the Egyptians and continued all the way to the Romans; she then used the data from this process as comparanda with Homeric colour terms. The result is that Wallace decisively distinguished herself from those before her who offered the physiological/evolutionary theory to explain Greek colour terms, as she pointed out the discrepancy between the rate of language development and biological evolution, aligning herself with Boas.⁶⁸ Although she fell into the trap of offering colour chips for the terms she discussed (perhaps influenced by the relatively new and alluringly precise Munsell system), Wallace concluded her project by turning back to the question of perception. This made her study the first on Greek terms that worked from cognition toward perception and a stark departure from studies like that of Gladstone, which took perception as a starting point.

In the work of Platnauer and Wallace, the influence of anthropology on classicists is increasingly evident. If classicists had begun the conversation on language and culture by asking questions of perception about colour terms in the 1800s, by the first half of the 1900s they were questioning the role of cognition and the broader influence of culture on it, and recognizing the distinction between the two processes.

Cultural Linguistics and the Question of Colour

By the twentieth century, the work of Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus had also opened up new avenues of colour-term study outside of Greco-Roman antiquity. Magnus, in particular, had shown that colour was a strong basis for comparative study, while the burgeoning field of anthropology offered the necessary data to do so. The emphasis on perception, well-established by this time as the standard means of understanding colour terminology for classical philologists, was mirrored in the work of the first linguistic anthropologists. The pattern that emerged from these early colour studies, first suggested by

66 Wallace, 1927, 25.

67 Wallace's choice of terminology here indicates familiarity with the Munsell system, which she referred to as “unscientific, metaphysical, but interesting” in her bibliography.

68 Wallace 1927, 53.

Magnus himself in 1877,⁶⁹ was as follows: in the languages containing only two terms for all hues, red (sometimes referred to as bright) and black were used; three-term languages added white; use of green also entailed a term for yellow; blue was only used in when all the other hues were present.⁷⁰ This pattern suggested linguistic evolution was universal.

The debate over physiological evolution that had occupied so much of classicists' work on colour terms, and which was difficult for Platnauer to discard, also flourished among anthropologists. A major step toward rejecting this came in 1904, when R. S. Woodworth, a psychologist, sought to prove that previous work distinguishing mental capacity between races (often setting white Europeans as superior to all others) was "not a little of the ludicrous."⁷¹ In his refutation, he reviewed previous work on the sensory perception of various peoples, but also conducted his own colour matching test on tribal peoples who had been brought to the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. In his report on this testing, he cited the theories of Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus, placing them alongside similar research done by W. H. R. Rivers on Torres Strait Islanders in 1898, in which Rivers arrived at much the same conclusion as the other three scholars had regarding the order in which colour terms are acquired.⁷² Although Woodworth claimed that his study was so different from that of Rivers as to be incomparable with it, he nevertheless concluded that "the color sense is probably very much the same all over the world."⁷³

Linguistic universality based on studies of colour terminology (that is, those that claimed one pattern for colour-term adoption/evolution for multiple languages) increasingly fell out of fashion as linguistic relativity of the sort championed by Boas and his followers became increasingly codified. This was largely due to work on colour terms. In an article calling for more anthropological research into linguistic relativity regarding sense-perception, Boas used the example of the blue-green conflation or yellow-green conflation of certain languages.⁷⁴ Geddes likewise prioritized relativity in an important study of colour terms published in 1946. In 1944, W. R. Geddes had performed research on residents of Fiji (native Fijians, those of Indian descent, and Europeans) and sought to answer a question nearly identical to the one Gladstone, Geiger,

69 Magnus 1877, 41–2.

70 MacLaury 2001, 1227.

71 Woodworth cites the infamous practice of studying the average brain weights of various races as an example of what he wished to disprove (1910, 172).

72 I.e., with blue being the last colour acquired (Rivers 1901).

73 Woodworth 1910, 179.

74 Boas 1910, 377.

and Magnus had asked of the ancient Greeks: Why did it seem from their colour terms that Fijian natives could not distinguish colours as their European counterparts did?⁷⁵ Where Gladstone had compiled a lexicon of colour terms from Homer's epics, Geddes was able to question Fijians directly to answer that question. Since the physiological question was nearly impossible to dismiss, particularly in studies that included race as a basis of comparison, he also tested his subjects for colour-blindness. Using colour chips to test his subjects, Geddes came to the relativistic conclusion that Fijian colour terminology was not defective, but rather divided the spectrum differently than European colour terminologies, with greater emphasis on saturation (Munsell's chroma).⁷⁶

Geddes' work raised the issue that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis sought to resolve. It proved that Fijian islanders had both perception and cognition of blue because they were able to distinguish it from other colours, namely green, and had given it its own term.⁷⁷ Did this then mean that assigning a colour a name was connected to the ability to remember that colour, confirming that a linguistic factor could affect a non-linguistic one?⁷⁸ Cross-linguistic research undertaken in 1953 by Eric Lenneberg and John Roberts on yellow and orange perception in English and Zuni, which uses a single term for this range of hues, suggested a correlation between linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Unlike the English speakers and many of the bilingual English-Zuni speakers tested, monolingual Zuni speakers tended to have difficulty distinguishing between the two hues.⁷⁹ This correlation between language and cognition did not, however, give any clear evidence of a "direction of causality."⁸⁰ Although anthropologists had access to native speakers and colour chips, they were still struggling to establish whether perception or cognition determined colour terminology. Classicists like Platnauer and Wallace, by comparison, had pivoted between the two.

75 Geddes 1946, 30. As had happened with the earlier studies of Homeric Greek, the emphasis of value over hue and confusion over hue designations led to this conclusion (Geddes 1946, 33–34). Geddes' argument for saturation is not unlike Platnauer's for lustre from twenty years prior.

76 Geddes 1946, 36.

77 Although Geddes found that the green term, "drokadroka" was often applied to both green and blue objects alike, when called on to differentiate green and blue, the Fijian subjects in his study used the term "karakarawa" for blue (1946, 34).

78 Biggam 2012, 18.

79 Lenneberg and Roberts 1953, 10.

80 Brown and Lenneberg 1954, 461.

Brent Berlin and Paul Kay found the relativism of Lenneberg and Roberts, which they characterized as “extreme,” to be troubling, as it precluded semantic universals, and so they undertook their own cross-linguistic study beginning in 1967.⁸¹ Cross-linguistic work on such an unprecedented scale had never been attempted. They hoped that through their use of this large amount of data they could prove that there was indeed a universal pattern in the development of colour terminology across languages and that this occurred in an “evolutionary” manner.⁸² In doing so, they also wanted to show that individual languages did not divide the spectrum arbitrarily into hues. In these goals, they unwittingly aligned themselves with Gladstone’s teleological evolution of language, but discarded perception as its basis.

Berlin and Kay gathered data from ninety-eight languages, primarily from native speakers living in the San Francisco Bay Area,⁸³ using a complete set of Munsell colour chips (similar materials to those used by Lenneberg and Roberts in their Zuni study). Basic colour terms for each language were elicited, and then subjects mapped out the boundaries of each term using the colour chips.⁸⁴ In the case of languages for which they did not have access to native speakers, Berlin and Kay consulted anthropological studies, such as the work of Lenneberg and Roberts on the Zuni. For ancient Greek, they used Arthur Capell’s very brief account of Homeric Greek.

Their research revealed that there are eleven basic colour categories from which all languages draw their basic colour terms: white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and grey.⁸⁵ Berlin and Kay also observed a pattern in how colour terms are distributed across languages that supported their universalist-evolutionary approach. Their observed pattern, echoing the conclusions from Magnus’ comparative work, is as follows:

- 1) All languages contain terms for white and black.
- 2) If a language contains three terms, then it contains a term for red.

81 Berlin and Kay 1969, 1. Noam Chomsky’s theories of universality in the structure of language were also gaining traction at the time, although Berlin and Kay do not directly acknowledge this influence.

82 Berlin and Kay 1969, 1.

83 In many cases, Berlin and Kay only had access to a single speaker of a given language, although they did work with groups as large as forty (Berlin and Kay 1969, 7).

84 Berlin and Kay 1969, 5.

85 The rules for determining basic colour terms, as used by psychologists, linguists, and anthropologists, are as follows: they must be monolexic, they must not signify anything included in any other colour term, they must be applicable to any object, and they must be salient to speakers of the language (Berlin and Kay 1969, 6).

- 3) If a language contains four terms, then it contains a term for either green or yellow (but not both).
- 4) If a language contains five terms, then it contains terms for both green and yellow.
- 5) If a language contains six terms, then it contains a term for blue.
- 6) If a language contains seven terms, then it contains a term for brown.
- 7) If a language contains eight or more terms, then it contains a term for purple, pink, orange, grey, or some combination of these.⁸⁶

Assigning one of the stages outlined above to each of the languages in their study, Berlin and Kay proposed that colour terminology in an individual language undergoes temporal evolution in a relatively fixed manner, although this does not reflect any difference in a speaker's actual perception of colour.⁸⁷ Languages from stages I to III, they noted, are spoken by small, isolated populations with "limited technology,"⁸⁸ therefore the acquisition of colour terms is an indicator of socio-cultural development. While Berlin and Kay had decisively cast aside the vision-related hypotheses of their nineteenth-century forebears, they maintained their evolutionary spirit. In the summary of their research, they proposed, citing Chomsky's universalist theories of syntax, that language is based in "bio-morphological structures,"⁸⁹ and so returned, albeit vaguely, to a physiological explanation of linguistic evolution.

Homeric Greek must have seemed a necessary inclusion to Berlin and Kay, since Homeric Greek had been foundational to the study of colour terms due to its limited colour lexicon and since philological work had effectively set the path for comparative colour studies.⁹⁰ However, rather than turning to a comprehensive source for Homeric Greek colour terms, one comparable in scope if not in method to the anthropological studies they used, Berlin and Kay drew their Greek colour terms from a brief (less than one page) discussion of perceptual grids in Arthur Capell's *Studies in Socio-Linguistics*. Using this

86 Berlin and Kay 1969, 2–3.

87 Berlin and Kay 1969, 5.

88 They offer this with the caveats that there is no clear causation between technology and colour terms and that anthropology struggles to measure concepts like development and complexity in terms of cultures (Berlin and Kay 1969, 15–16).

89 Berlin and Kay 1969, 109.

90 Although they professed ignorance of the history of colour term study at the inception of their project, Berlin and Kay did look into the work of Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus in compiling their appendix (Berlin and Kay 1969, 134).

source, Berlin and Kay categorized Homeric Greek as a stage IIIB language, meaning it had terms for black, white, red, and yellow. Berlin and Kay gave γλαυκός as the “black” term, which is not supported by Capell and which I suspect would give most classicists pause. While Capell was trained as a classicist and his observations about γλαυκός, ἐρυθρός, λευκός, and χλωρός are accurate,⁹¹ he did not mention the concerns about Greek colour terminology that had spawned the entire discussion, nor are his comments anything approaching comprehensive.⁹² In short, Berlin and Kay used and made rather free use of a non-representative source. In a book almost entirely composed of a collection of facts, as Newcomer and Faris pointed out in their response to their study, Berlin and Kay made multiple factual errors that jeopardize their larger point about universality.⁹³

Placing Homeric Greek beside Somali or Korean, as Berlin and Kay did in their original study, assumes that it a) represents a multiplicity of speakers and b) is not a literary dialect.⁹⁴ Just as Gage calls for more attention to sub-groups within a culture (for example, using children or those who have a professional interest in colour, such as artists),⁹⁵ this dialect of Greek requires specific attention that acknowledges it as a literary construct that changed over time as part of the epic tradition. Berlin and Kay used it to illustrate a broader process of cultural evolution and in doing so, fell into the same trap that Gladstone did.

The conclusions from the original publication of *Basic Color Terms* have proved to be both hugely influential and hugely divisive; no current study of colour terms can avoid positioning itself with respect to Berlin and Kay’s study. While there was a great deal of praise for the universality they identified in *Basic Color Terms*, their methodology has frequently come under fire.⁹⁶ As Gage points out, we are to assume that the subjects of their contemporary study responded “in a ‘natural’ way to the presentation of small chips of coloured plastic from the Munsell System used by researchers, ... which itself grew out

91 Berlin and Kay extrapolate darkness from objects γλαυκός is used to describe, discarding the luminosity it often describes (which they even quote from Capell) (1969, 70–71).

92 Capell 1966, 40. E.g., why not include μέλας as the opposite of λευκός?

93 Newcomer and Faris 1971, 272–73. Many of these errors are addressed by both Berlin and Kay in their subsequent revisions of their initial methodology.

94 It also seems to be the only literary dialect used by Berlin and Kay, who do not mention this fact. For the literary character of Homeric Greek, see Palmer 1980, 83–101.

95 Gage 1993, 79.

96 Newcomer and Faris, for example, applauded Berlin and Kay’s results but called their methodology “an outdated form of science” (1971, 272). Since 1969, both Brent Berlin and Paul Kay have significantly revised their original positions (see below).

of nineteenth-century assumptions about ‘primary’ colours.”⁹⁷ In recognition of this, both Berlin and Kay continued to adapt their original methodology, especially as it applied to the evolutionary stages they had identified, until they finally discarded cultural evolution from their theory.⁹⁸

Conclusion

Gladstone, Geiger, and Magnus sought to understand how the ancient Greeks saw the world and, in doing so, opened the door to cultural linguistics. They used literature to attempt to open up the world presented to them by Homer, to gain access to the way the actual Greeks of Homer’s time perceived their environment. Homeric Greek, therefore, dominated early comparative work by philologists and continued to hold an important place in the work of classicists on colour terms. Anthropologists began to ask similar questions about the cultures they studied but introduced cognition to the conversation. They moved away from the evolutionary framework established in the nineteenth century as they began to study languages on individual bases, and slowly abandoned the search for overarching, universally-applicable theories. Subsequent work on Greek colour terms followed anthropology in this trajectory, while comparative linguists sought to establish the relativity of individual languages through colour term usage. In the 1960s, Berlin and Kay reintroduced Homeric Greek to the broader conversation by using it as proof for their theory of universal linguistic evolution. While they had discarded the physiological theories of the late nineteenth century, Berlin and Kay’s insistence on a universal narrative of linguistic development ultimately reunited Homeric Greek with the progressivist thought that had dominated early work on the topic.

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97 Gage 1993, 79.

98 Kay, for example, revised his understanding of Stage III from *Basic Color Terms* after he became aware of new information on green and blue (now considered the category “grue”) in several languages (1975, 260). Cultural evolution was no longer considered in Kay, Berlin, and Merrifield 1991.

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PART 3

*Anthropological and Classical Others: Theories,
Methods, and Approaches*



Pinpointing Pausanias: Ethnography, Analogy, and Autopsy

Daniel Stewart

There have been at least two earlier volumes dealing with the relationship between anthropology and classics: Marett's 1908 edited volume, featuring such luminaries as Sir Arthur Evans and Gilbert Murray, and Kluckhohn's 1961 collection of lectures delivered at Brown University.¹ The tone of both volumes is that the relationship between the disciplines is not only obvious, but assured. As Cartledge pointed out some time ago,² however, Kluckhohn published just as the split between the disciplines seemed widest. While, in the nineteenth century, the two humanist disciplines had shared a Janus-like relationship, with one looking forward and one looking backward but both looking at culture, by the mid-twentieth century, the disciplines could not really claim to have much of a relationship at all. Partly this has to do with the speedy theoretical development of anthropology in the early twentieth century, from Boas and Malinowski to Kroeber and Geertz (and, by implication, the relative theoretical stagnation in classics in the same period). This also has partly to do with a significant shift in methodology: anthropology came to be increasingly defined by participant observation, and the dead cultures of Greece and Rome seemingly offered little opportunity for classicists to take part.³

However, what is interesting about the early representations of the relationship between anthropology and classics is that the foundation for this

¹ Marett 1908; Kluckhohn 1961.

² Cartledge 1994, 3–4.

³ It should be noted that this broad generalization falls apart quite quickly from the mid-1980s onwards, especially in the borrowing of anthropological theory and method by classicists and ancient historians (e.g., Detienne 2005; Berent 2000). Anthropology, on the other hand, does not seem to share a reciprocal interest (Knapp 1992 and Harkin 2010 for some exceptions). Some classicists also maintained an inherent chauvinism and condescension towards anthropology, evident from an early stage: "The types of human culture are in fact, reducible to two, a simpler and a more complex ... By established convention Anthropology occupies itself solely with the culture of the simpler or lower kind" (Marett 1908, 3). There are also notable exceptions to this mid-twentieth century fissure between the disciplines, such as Dodds 1951 and Lévi-Strauss 1955.

connection was not only in the object of study (culture) but also in the means of study—that is, through description and catalogue, usually acquired through first-hand experience. Also interesting is the implicit understanding in these early works that archaeology—specifically classical archaeology—straddles the line between the disciplines, thanks to its focus on the “culture of things.”⁴

Indeed, some of the academics we would now associate with classics and classical archaeology are identified in early works as anthropologists, as Sir Arthur Evans is in Marett’s 1908 volume, for example.⁵ Similarly, some of those we now think of as anthropologists were initially thought of as classicists—Sir James Frazer being perhaps the best example. Though he is now seen to be an early social anthropologist, he was a Classics Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, and had no involvement in the establishment of the department of Anthropology at Cambridge despite being a fellow there for more than 30 years.⁶ Frazer’s first published work was a school edition of Sallust;⁷ he signed a book contract to provide a translation of Pausanias in 1884 (though he did not deliver this until 1898). In fact, it was his reading of Pausanias and preparation of his commentary that inspired *The Golden Bough*,⁸ the anthropological study of religion that brought him notoriety, if not fame.

This chapter examines the impact of Pausanias’ *Periegesis*, and Frazer’s translation of it, on early archaeological investigations of the Greek landscape. For Pausanias, the material ruins of the Greek landscape presented a way of reconciling the past and his contemporary present;⁹ this model also served as the basis for the modern engagement of the nascent nation of Greece’s place within later European culture. Central to my argument is the way in which “the culture of things” was interrogated by early archaeologists working in Greece, and by Frazer’s commentary on Pausanias, largely through recourse to “seeing for one-self” (frequently termed *autopsy*), and through cross-cultural comparisons. Many of these features—description, first-hand experience,

4 Kluckhohn 1961, 44. Note, however, that he also recognizes the current (to him, and unfortunately also to us) gulf between classical archaeology and anthropological archaeology (Kluckhohn 1961, 21).

5 Marett 1908, 4.

6 Or so claims Leach, without citation, Leach et al. 1966, 562. Note Ackerman’s take on Frazer’s early anthropology (Ackerman 1990, 35–52): to Ackerman, Frazer was inherently belletristic and was interested less in anthropology *per se* than in particularization (as opposed to generalization). On Leach’s antipathy towards Frazer, see Beard 1992.

7 Frazer 1884; Besterman 1968.

8 Pretzler 2007, 126. A much more detailed history of this period can be found in Ackerman 1990, 53–69.

9 Stewart 2013.

and cross-cultural comparison—lie at the heart of ethnographic practice as well.¹⁰ There was significant cross-fertilization between archaeology and what might be more properly termed cultural anthropology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As we will see, Frazer's impact on that comes primarily in his opposition to the German view of Pausanias' uselessness (as expounded by Wilamowitz and Dörpfeld) and, of course, his comparative analogical approach to the study of culture. That legacy is still present within contemporary practice of classical archaeology.

Pausanias: Background and Structure

As mentioned, one of Frazer's first major works was his translation and commentary of Pausanias' *Periegesis Hellados* or *Description of Greece*. Comparatively little is known about the ancient author we call Pausanias—even his name is, at best, a guess based on a much later attribution. The first certain reference to his work is in the sixth-century CE *Ethnika* of Stephanos of Byzantium, though the text of the *Periegesis* itself suggests a date of late second century CE.¹¹ The lack of specific knowledge about the ancient author is significant because the lack of a deep classical engagement with the text meant that it was easier for subsequent generations of “modern” scholars to invent the Pausanias they needed for their time (more on this below).

The *Periegesis* is a significant work, however. Over ten books, the author describes the cities and sanctuaries of mainland Greece that he saw first-hand, and he records what he deemed “most worth remembering” about each place.¹² What he selected for recording is a curious admixture of place, culture, practice, religion, myth, history, art, and architecture presented through the lens of first-hand experience. It includes not only what the author saw, but also what he was told by locals (and often his own opinion of the merits of local history). His work presents, at face value, a textual snapshot of Greece in the second

10 Ethnography as an articulated intellectual endeavour began with Malinowski (1916), but it is certainly seen in nascent forms in the drive to create “textual museums” of description in both early anthropology and classical archaeology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Bennett 1998, 951–52).

11 Steph. Byz., s.v. Αἰμωνία (p. 50, line 5 Meineke), s.v. Ἀραιθύρεα (p. 108, line 16 Meineke), s.v. Σφακτηρία (p. 594, line 23 Meineke). On the date of composition and early transmission, see Diller 1955; Akujärvi 2005, 114; Guilmet 2007.

12 Paus. 3.11.1.

century CE, and as a result has had a profound impact on studies of Greek religious practice and the development of classical archaeology in Greece.¹³

Pausanias structured his work around three main elements: *autopsia* (αὐτοψία), *theoremata* (θεωρήματα), and *logoi* (λόγοι).¹⁴ *Autopsia* is “seeing for oneself,” experiencing a custom or place first-hand and using your physical experience as a basis for authority.¹⁵ *Theoremata* are the sights and *logoi* are the stories and traditions associated with those sights that Pausanias built his text around.¹⁶ These *theoremata* are the places, monuments, and sanctuaries that Pausanias deemed worthy of recording, through his process of selection.¹⁷ The *theoremata* are often called “descriptions” by modern scholars, but they also serve a specific structural role—they are the skeleton to the flesh of the *logoi*.¹⁸ The *logoi* serve to highlight what is memorable about each place that Pausanias mentions—in other words, there is no material necessity to the importance of a place; rather, what makes a place meaningful are the often intangible histories and myths that are attached to that locale. Material markers of that meaning are often present in Pausanias, but they are often the results—and not the causes—of the *logoi* Pausanias recounts.

Most of Pausanias’ work is broadly structured according to topography. That is, he introduces places and the stories associated with them as he encounters them in the landscape—as if the physical structure triggers his selective remembrance.¹⁹ And while Pausanias is just as likely to abandon topographical order for a thematically determined discussion of monuments,²⁰ he rarely does so without having started from a topographic anchor. Crucially, running through both his description of sights (the *theoremata*) and the cultural and historical practices associated with these (the *logoi*) is his claim to eye-witness status—he knows because he has seen it for himself.²¹

13 For more detail, and supporting bibliography, see Stewart 2013.

14 Akujärvi 2005; Pretzler 2007, 6–14. On structure more generally (and language specifically), see Hutton 2005, 175–240.

15 E.g., Paus. 2.22.3. Akujärvi 2005, 90–130.

16 Akujärvi 2005, 6–7.

17 Pausanias himself varies his criteria for selection: those sites “worthy of memory” (3.6.5, 3.11.1), “worthy of description” (2.15.1, 2.29.1), or “worthy of seeing” (1.1.3, 3.5.6). See Elsner 2010, 159; Pirenne-Delforge 2008, 97–173, esp. 103–112, 172.

18 On the *logoi*, see Akujärvi 2005, 42–5; Pirenne-Delforge 2008, 41–95.

19 Habicht 1998, 20–22; Hutton 2005, 77–82.

20 E.g., in his description of the courts (1.28.8–11) and Hadrianic buildings of Athens (1.18.9), or in his discussion of the altars at Olympia (5.14.4–15.12).

21 Hearing and seeing as sources of knowledge: 4.31.5, 5.12.3, 3.25.7, 6.6.10f, 8.10.2, 9.39.14.

I hinted earlier that the lack of a long textual tradition related to Pausanias' work helped make his text more mutable. Irrespective of Pausanias' actual status in antiquity, we have no information regarding it. This "silence" was taken to mean that he was essentially unread in his own time, and therefore relatively insignificant.²² The idea of an "unread" Pausanias is now considered unlikely, with Snodgrass proposing an early circle of readers in the second century CE that included Athenagoras, Pollux, and later Aelian.²³ The text was rediscovered in the West in the fifteenth century when a manuscript was brought from Constantinople to Florence at around the same time as the last of the Byzantine Empire's possessions in the Greek mainland were being mopped up by the Ottomans.²⁴ The inclusion of this descriptive text in the major western libraries of the day raised its status from an ignored curio to one of the most important "histories" of the Greek world.²⁵ The collapse of Byzantium in the fifteenth century led to a Greek diaspora, and these communities sought ways to maintain their cultural identity in their new geopolitical situation. Pausanias helped create and maintain a sense of this new diaspora "Greekness" by providing a way for these communities (and other Hellenophiles) to engage with their homeland, now cut-off under Ottoman rule.²⁶ In other words, engagement with Pausanias was first and foremost governed by the contemporary political and cultural concerns of his readers, at whatever time they were in.

Antiquarians, Archaeology, and a little Anthropology

The uniqueness of Pausanias' text—a description of monuments, places, and their local meaning and points of significance (according to Pausanias, at least)—lent it a privileged position among antiquarians and early archaeologists. Early nineteenth-century western European travellers to Greece—such as Edward Dodwell (in 1801, 1805–1807), Colonel William Martin Leake (in 1804–1807), and Ernst Curtius (in 1839–41, with Karl Otfried

22 Habicht 1998, 1; Diller 1955, 272.

23 Snodgrass 2003; Akujärvi 2005, 2.

24 Tolia 2007, 58. There are 18 manuscripts of Pausanias, but none are earlier than 1450. All seem to be based on the same codex of Niccolò Niccoli of Florence, from 1418 (Diller 1956).

25 In its earliest readings, the *Periegesis* was understood as a "history" and its author as a "historian." See Bodin 1566 (1945), 20–24; Ulman and Stadter 1972, 261.

26 Spencer 1954, 1–25; Yerasimos 1991, 12; Vingopoulou 2004.

Müller)—arrived in Greece with copies of Pausanias in their bags.²⁷ William Gell was perhaps the most influential of these antiquarians, travelling to Greece several times (1801–2, 1804–6, 1811), and publishing an account that was an explicit juxtaposition with Pausanias.²⁸ He purports to follow the same route as Pausanias through the Peloponnese, and inserts into his own travelogue excerpts from Pausanias' text in order to flesh out his own topography.

Leake also commented on the indispensable nature of Pausanias to his own topographic endeavours:

Of perseverance, it must with gratitude be admitted, that we have an excellent example in our guide Pausanias, even without omitting the consideration, that, instead of exploring unknown and deserted sites, he was travelling in an ordinary manner, over the roads of a civilized country, from one celebrated place to another, in each of which he found an *exegete* to assist him in all his researches. So complete, however, were these researches, and so ardent his curiosity, that it requires the most detailed inspection of the country to be assured that one has not overlooked some still existing proof of his accuracy.²⁹

Leake is, at times, at pains to praise his hero, claiming that “I have every day occasion to remark instances in which it is impossible correctly to understand him, or to translate his words, without actually following him through the country.”³⁰ Pausanias' text is not an easy one to read, in English or Greek. He was obviously an educated (and wealthy) man, not uncritical of his guides and sources, but his text is dry, sober, dull, and pedantic. He is always restrained, and never displays a sense of humour. He allows little of himself into the text.³¹ But the fact that Pausanias was never going to be one of the “literary” greats, in the eyes of his nineteenth-century readers, gave him, in an odd twist, an extra authority—he was “the dependable dullard,” a naïve plodder providing

27 European travellers frequently turned to Pausanias to help guide their way through Ottoman and post-Ottoman Greece, beginning perhaps with Jacob Spon (1675–76) and his English translator Sir George Wheler (Spon 1724). Dodwell 1819; Leake 1830; Curtius 1851.

28 Gell 1810.

29 William M. Leake 1830, 287 (chap. 18, “Arcadia”).

30 William M. Leake 1830, 287–88. Indeed, the previously quoted praise is essentially a qualification before this complaint regarding the difficulty of understanding exactly what topographic element Pausanias is describing.

31 Habicht 1998, 160–62.

an invaluable but mechanistic description of his surroundings.³² He could be trusted, in part, because he was boring. This perceived authorial neutrality allowed scholars to use Pausanias as reportage, easily justifying the dislocation of smaller passages of text, just as Dodwell did.

Dodwell and Gell, who travelled together briefly in 1806, used Pausanias to help navigate the Greek landscape. They ventured into the mountainous region of Achaia and ancient Arcadia by following Pausanias' description of the mountains around Stymphalos.³³ They studied the text carefully and attempted to identify ancient sites, like Lykosoura, Midea, and Hysia.³⁴ These antiquarians undertook topographic research that juxtaposed the landscape they experienced with that described by Pausanias in his text. British travellers, in particular, seemed drawn to historical topography, comparing their views of the landscape with that of Pausanias, turning their own writings into early commentaries on the Greek text, in one way or another. For a few short decades in the nineteenth century, Pausanias became not just *a* window but *the* window into the material past of Greece. As with Leake, however, there was a tacit understanding that to "get" Pausanias you needed to be in Greece—the landscape and the author were inseparable.³⁵

Antiquarians identified with Pausanias—they prepared for their trips by reading him, they followed his steps and attempted to reconstruct his routes, and they saw in him not only a trusted guide but an exemplar. Sturtzenbecker explicitly based his description of Delphi on the narrative of Pausanias;³⁶ for the French antiquarian Pouqueville (who travelled extensively in Greece from 1798–1820), he was a "safe and faithful guide" and the author of "an immortal work."³⁷ References to Pausanias provided for the antiquarian topographers an added authority, and an extra claim to authenticity.³⁸

32 Hutton 2005, 4–5. I hasten to add that, following Hutton, I do not subscribe to this view. Pausanias is very much trying to be a literary author consciously shaping his text to be much more than a simple description. My view is laid out in Stewart 2013.

33 See the excellent discussion in Maher 2012.

34 Lykosoura: Dodwell 1819, 2:394; Midea: Gell 1810, 84, 97; Hysia: William M. Leake 1830, 2:337.

35 Pretzler 2007, 136.

36 Sturtzenbecker 1948, 119.

37 Pouqueville 1805, 98.

38 Many examples are found in Georgopoulou et al. 2007, 155–68, for example, Dodwell at Orchomenos: "In the eastern foothills of the Acropolis, and north of Kefissos, are the remains of the treasure of Minyas, which Pausanias considered to be one of the wonders of Greece" (Dodwell 1819, 226).

Leake stands at the cusp of the transition from antiquarianism—the collection of historical facts, as evidenced by texts and artefacts—to scientific archaeology—which is as interested in context and cultural processes as the material past.³⁹ “The works of Pausanias constitute irrefutable evidence that the author himself had thoroughly examined every part of the country, and no author provides more unshakeable proofs of truth and exactitude.”⁴⁰ The transition from antiquarian to archaeological investigations in Greece in the nineteenth century was, especially in anglophone research, facilitated in part by frequent reference to the topographical writings of Pausanias.⁴¹ At the forefront of antiquarian approaches was the idea of *autopsia*, or “seeing for oneself,” which is driven specifically by engagement with the text of Pausanias. This is an idea that had deep resonances for both the development of archaeology and anthropology more broadly, as it has close links to anthropological notions of ethnography. Indeed, ethnographic analogy has become one of the foundational toolkits in archaeological interpretation.⁴² But excavation too is about autopsy—the steady, methodical, mostly vertical, accumulation of seeing for yourself.⁴³ As Thornton said, “Descriptions depend on previous descriptions as much as theories depend on previous theories.”⁴⁴

This attitude was also shared by Frazer. Pausanias was a particular spur to Frazer’s researches, and it was in part due to his readings of Pausanias that Frazer undertook the research that would become *The Golden Bough*. However, as mentioned above, Frazer had first received a contract from George Macmillan for a translation and “brief” commentary on Pausanias in 1884. He broke off that work to follow the tangent that became *The Golden Bough*, but Pausanias was never forgotten. In the same month of 1890 that he submitted the proof for *The Golden Bough*, he departed for Greece, spending eight weeks visiting sites in central Greece and the Peloponnese.⁴⁵ He would return in 1895, and his published commentary includes much up-to-the-minute archaeological information gleaned from his travels, some of which had not been published anywhere else.⁴⁶

39 Wagstaff 2001; Schnapp 2002.

40 William Martin Leake 1841, 32.

41 Wagstaff 2001.

42 Wylie 1988; Wylie 2002.

43 “Archaeology is the only branch of anthropology where we kill our informants in the process of studying them” (Flannery 1982, 275).

44 Thornton 1988, 20.

45 Ackerman 1990, 111–13.

46 Ackerman 1990, 126–28.

Pausanias' method of writing—his proto-thick-descriptions⁴⁷ of place and meaning—suggested to readers that to understand the text you needed to stand in his footsteps. This led to a wide-ranging debate about the accuracy and trustworthiness of Pausanias' text, because as soon as people began visiting modern Greece in search of ancient landscapes, they were bound to be disappointed.

Beginnings of Scientific Archaeology

The transition from antiquarianism to archaeology meant that scholarly emphasis moved away from an overt reliance on selected excerpts to a reading of the text in its broader context, which included first-hand fieldwork experience of relevant archaeological sites mentioned in the ancient text.

A careful reading of textual sources had been seen as providing a way of dealing with the problem of the chronological depth of the inhabited landscape: modern Greece was not ancient Greece, but the texts could help transport readers across that divide. Descriptions in the texts could help fuel archaeological discovery—after all, Schliemann's careful reading of Homer had led him to Troy, and his careful reading of Pausanias had led him to the grave circle at Mycenae.⁴⁸ Moreover, historical explanation could be mapped on to physical remains as if there was an unproblematic correlation between identifiable historical events and changes in material culture—the historical texts of Athens could be illuminated by studying the physical remains.⁴⁹ In other words, time in an historical sense and time in a literary sense were seen to be the same thing. An event in a literary account was thought to have necessary material and historical resonances—the literary event was viewed as a stone dropped into a lake. The practice of history recovered the ripples; archaeology recovered the wet stones, shaped and formed through contact with history.

The long-standing approach to Pausanias echoed that conceptualization of time. The landscapes that Pausanias describes within his work were viewed as discrete landscapes existing within a distinct second-century CE context. The stone here is Pausanias' text, a real and manifestly tangible reality dropped into the linear pond of time that stretches from then until now. Modern scholars

47 "Thick description" is famously Clifford Geertz's attempt to reconcile ethnographic description with cultural context. It aims to describe a behaviour so that people outside the culture of origin can see its import (Geertz 1973, 5–6).

48 Paus. 2.16; Schliemann 1878, 335.

49 Shanks 1996, 48ff.

have then looked at various ripples to try to understand how these places looked and how behaviours were structured in Roman Greece.

Inherent to Pausanias' method, however, is omission: he tells the reader that he is being selective in what he records. Selecting necessitates "choosing between," and the recognition of this led to several polarizing debates regarding the author's reliability. Pausanias is integral to the birth of classical archaeology—the discipline emerged from the notion that there was truth in texts that could be traced materially. These early debates shaped the idea of what constitutes an archaeological resource.

In the 1880s, German archaeologists working on the Athenian acropolis, including the influential architect Wilhelm Dörpfeld, recovered the remains of a small circular Ionic temple aligned precisely on the axis of the Parthenon.⁵⁰ They were looking to disprove an assertion by the eighteenth-century antiquarians Stuart and Revett that a Temple to Rome and Augustus was present on the Acropolis—in this they failed.⁵¹ They quickly uncovered square foundations and clear evidence that the temple was related to the post-27 BCE restoration of the neighbouring Erechtheion. There is a clear political reason why such a temple would be placed in this position and in that form so soon after Augustus became Augustus—he wanted to tie Roman rule to the pinnacle of Athenian achievement. But what frustrated Dörpfeld, Kavvadias and Kawerau was the fact that they had not thought it would be there, because Pausanias does not mention it. Dörpfeld was, in fact, one of the few German archaeologists who still saw value in Pausanias; he would later develop a friendship with James Frazer, even as they remained at odds about the interpretation of the topography of Athens.⁵² Frazer was especially grateful when Dörpfeld recommended the Pausanias commentary to his students, many of whom accompanied the German archaeologist on his annual trips to Greece.⁵³

However, much of German scholarship at that time had come to view Pausanias with distrust, largely thanks to the almost continuous vitriol

50 Binder 1969; Kavvadias 1906; Kawerau 1974; Travlos 1971, 494–97.

51 Cyriac of Ancona had initially recorded the temple in the fifteenth century, based on the survival of an inscription. The initial German hypothesis was that the inscription had been moved (Binder 1969).

52 Frazer and his wife were friends with Jane Harrison, also at Cambridge (Ackerman 1990, 174; Robinson 2002, 121), and Harrison was a heady admirer of Dörpfeld, even writing a book on topography at his insistence (Harrison 1906; Robinson 2002, 182–83). It is hard not to see Harrison as being largely responsible for the cordial relationship between Frazer and Dörpfeld.

53 Noted in a letter of 8 May 1900 (Ackerman 1990, 327n14).

emanating from Wilamowitz.⁵⁴ Wilamowitz was a prolific philologist and art historian, and later the director of the central Berlin office of the German Archaeological Institute. Wilamowitz used the discovery of the temple as another stick with which to beat the reliability of Pausanias. He had for years been railing against the use of Pausanias in archaeology, claiming that he was a plagiarist, a fantasist, and not to be trusted.⁵⁵ For Wilamowitz and his followers, archaeological questions could be settled by reference to the broader classical corpus of texts; Frazer, on the other hand, saw in archaeology a way to access nuance that was missing from texts or a material means to formulate cultural comparison.

Willamowitz, Dörpfeld, and other archaeologists all realized that there was a reason a temple to Rome and Augustus appears on the Acropolis in a direct relationship with the Parthenon, but they failed to recognize that there is also a reason Pausanias does not mention it. For them, it was simply an example of Pausanias getting it wrong. But remember that Pausanias tells us repeatedly that his project is selective—he is purposefully not including everything; selection means exclusion. Pausanias' own autopsy allows him to make the judgment, and he is judging for a reason.

At the heart of many modern usages of Pausanias is the notion of comparativism,⁵⁶ the idea that the similarities and differences between and within cultures illuminate previously hidden universal facets of humanity. What is compared is a topic of much debate—for Pausanias, it was behaviours, rituals, beliefs and their material manifestations—but comparativism is foundational to contemporary approaches to ethnology, and lies at the heart of both Pausanias' project and Frazer's considerable output.

Comparativism does not now hold much sway among anthropological theorists⁵⁷—to paraphrase Spivak, comparison assumes a level playing field, and that field never exists. Comparison suggests a scientific approach of compare and contrast, but it is predicated on an unscientific judging and choosing.⁵⁸ Certainly, the type of comparativism that Frazer undertook is hard to defend today—his is the *sortes* method of carefully arranged and enumerated

54 Habicht 1998, 165–67.

55 Extensive examples are enumerated in Habicht 1998, 166. Habicht suggests a reason for Willamowitz' antipathy, which has to do with getting lost in the Greek countryside with a group of German functionaries and blaming Pausanias' text for the error that led him the wrong way (1998, 169–70).

56 Detienne 2005, 65. See also Short and Bettini, this volume.

57 But see Paden 2001 for recent attempts at rehabilitation.

58 Spivak 2009, 609–10. Much like Pausanias' self-professed selectivity.

exemplars—but within his work we can see echoes and understandings of Pausanias that still have resonance. Comparativism developed as a way to both typologize and understand other cultures; beliefs, customs, and certain modes of organization were seen as “universal” between cultures or societies. The best way to understand them was to compare their form of expression between societies, thus arriving at a “deeper” truth about humanity—in the same way that the comparison of certain linguistic similarities in some European, Sanskrit, and Iranian language groups led to the discovery of the older proto-Indo-European language.⁵⁹ Indeed, comparative philology was in some sense the progenitor of anthropology, and this understanding of the place of comparison can be found in the work of structuralists like Lévi-Strauss.⁶⁰

This understanding of the place of comparison is especially clear in the emphases given by both Pausanias and anthropology to autopsy, extended description, and cultural context. Seeing for oneself, through a regular and systematic program of fieldwork especially, was seen as an essential way to establish authority and to amass material to compare. This is part of why, for Frazer, the material proof of Pausanias’ descriptions recovered through archaeology undercut any textually-based criticisms generated by Willamowitz or Dörpfeld. Masses of information are of little value as just a dry list: they require a description of what they mean in both a local and wider context to tease out the implications for humanity as a whole.⁶¹ This itself led to the prominent criticisms of comparativism: that the categories of comparison were impositions (that is, important to us but not the cultures of origin) and that conclusions about cultural commonalities are so general as to be largely meaningless (so what if all societies make shelters, for example?).⁶²

Although the project of the early comparativists might now be seen as wrong-headed, it is important to disentangle comparativism from comparison. The beginnings of anthropology were shaped by attempts to compare simple societies with complex societies, through specific elements of culture: be they words, images, beliefs, social structures, or any of the messy panoply of attributes we take to be culture.⁶³ We still might disagree about definitions, approach, ideas surrounding simple and complex, and the extent and meaning

59 Turner 2014, 244–47, 293–96, 344–46.

60 Segal 2001.

61 This also led, in some ways, to the shift in anthropological method that emphasized local cultural context characterized by Malinowski and Boas (Strathern 1990, 86–87; Voget 1975, 320–26, 528).

62 Paden 2001, 276; Segal 2001, 341–43.

63 Bennett 1998.

or even suitability of points of comparison, but comparison is what we do—whether we are anthropologists, come from the classical disciplines, or belong somewhere in between.

Pausanias himself is comparing, of course, within his text. He is comparing different rituals and practices across mainland Greece, he is comparing the perceived antiquity of the important sanctuaries, and he is comparing his textually-derived expectation of place with his first-hand experience. His critics and admirers alike can point to his use of other ancient authors in his work.⁶⁴ By tracing the impact of autopsy on approaches to landscape history, we can see the impact of textually-based analyses of material culture to contemporary understandings of Greece—not just in how archaeologists and antiquarians engaged with the historic landscape, but also in how Pausanias engages with his landscape. The tension between Pausanias' own model of selecting what to describe and his aspiration towards comprehensiveness is central to understanding how some of the key aspects of classical archaeology in Greece developed.

Frazer and Pausanias

Frazer began his commentary on Pausanias by placing himself in opposition to Willamowitz—he was well aware of the latter's attacks on the ancient author, and apparently found them infuriating.⁶⁵ Whereas Willamowitz and his supporters claimed that Pausanias could not have seen what he claimed to have seen, or simply copied earlier works, Frazer, through a patient explanation of passages, monuments, and itineraries, showed the *periegesis* to be a coherent whole. Why does Frazer have this different approach, especially in light of the influential German attitude towards the author? It is tempting to use hindsight to claim that Pausanias' broadly ethnographic and antiquarian interests and his focus on religion and ritual resonated with Frazer's own. However, as Ackerman notes, the final three thousand page, six volume, thirteen-year labour began as a short translation aimed at tourists in Greece, pitched to a publisher keen to capitalize on the growing market in the wake of Schliemann's spectacular discoveries.⁶⁶ Frazer failed to meet the publisher's brief and instead exhibited the same concern for completeness and consistency

64 Perhaps best summed up by Habicht 1998, 96–116; Habicht 1985.

65 Ackerman 1990, 361 recounts a letter between Frazer and A. E. Housman, from 1927 in which Frazer lambasts Willamowitz. This is also discussed in Habicht 1998, 174–75.

66 Ackerman 1990, 54–57.

that Pausanias undertook in his own project: he undertook his work as a literary exercise and not as a straight description.

Many of Frazer's longer commentary entries are essentially essays, and they not only comment on Pausanias' text but reveal Frazer's comparative approach itself. The story of Phaethon driving the solar chariot reminds him of a story from "the Indians of British Columbia."⁶⁷ When Pausanias mentions an altar to "gods named unknown,"⁶⁸ Frazer cites comparative examples from the *Acts of the Apostles*, as well as from among the Zulu and the Inca.⁶⁹ Cross-cultural comparisons pervade the commentary, just as they do *The Golden Bough*. For Frazer, religion (especially ritual) is the key to understanding Pausanias and, more broadly, key to understanding core aspects of what it means to be human; for Pausanias, myth and ritual are key to understanding what it means to be Greek in the second century CE.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of Frazer's commentary for English-language archaeological scholarship in Greece. His was the first full English translation and commentary and as such was seized upon by reviewers as a work of utmost importance.⁷⁰ But more importantly, it was used by archaeologists to substantiate their own finds and helped place Pausanias firmly in their sights as a major source of archaeological knowledge.⁷¹ Frazer showed that Pausanias was trustworthy and accurate, despite the prevailing view of the German archaeological establishment. But more than that, Frazer showed that the union of comparativism and autopsy led to new knowledge about culture.

Analogy, Ethnography, and Pausanias

Analogical inference is one of the foundational interpretive tools in the current archaeological toolkit. One way or another, critically or uncritically, archaeologists use analogy in order to interpret the remains of past human action. Engagement with indigenous Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to the reinterpretation of prehistoric arrowheads in Europe. Contemporary studies of status and hierarchy in the European

67 Paus. 1.3.1. Frazer 1898, 2:60.

68 Paus. 1.1.4.

69 Frazer 1898, 2:33. See also MacCormack 2010, 292–93.

70 MacCormack 2010, 294.

71 Stewart 2013.

Neolithic use ethnographies derived from nineteenth-and early twentieth-century Pacific islanders.⁷²

Analogy has gone through periods of explicit critical exposure, notably in the discussions surrounding the advent of Processualism in the 1960s and the shift to post-processual or postmodernist approaches in the 1980s.⁷³ Debates about the role and value of analogy have tended to follow the lines of whether specific analogues have applicability to the past (is that bowl actually a bowl?), the extent to which “presentism” has entered the interpretation (how do you know that bowl is a woman’s bowl?), or whether appropriate contextualization has occurred within either source or subject (are you seriously comparing that IKEA bowl with Parthian Green Glaze?).⁷⁴

Whatever our focus, however, we continually use the known to explain the unknown. At its core, analogy is about identifying “structural similarity”:⁷⁵ the transposition of information between a source (that we think we know well) and a subject (that we would like to understand), with varying degrees of selectivity. Archaeological and historical interpretations are built upon analogical inference, and analogy is supported by subsequent interpretation, in a circular cycle of interpretations that lies at the heart of how we make sense of the past. This has significant implications for both classical archaeology and classics because of the central role of texts in this process for our discipline.

In most contexts, analogy in archaeology is used to mean ethnographic analogy. That is, evidence about cultural practices gleaned from anthropological ethnographic studies are used as analogues for understanding ancient practices. Indeed, the term analogy is frequently used as a shorthand for a single type of analogical evidence deriving from anthropological ethnographic investigation. For the most part, this means that critical discussion of analogy has been limited to pre- and proto-historic archaeological contexts (not least in Frazer’s own work on totemism and “savage” religion). With a few notable exceptions,⁷⁶ historical archaeologies have not really considered the place of analogy within their disciplines.

Within classical archaeology, our ethnographic informers wrote their thoughts down, and while we do not get to ask them questions directly, we use their words as referents for understanding the material past in almost exactly the same way as anthropologically derived ethnographies. However, we tend

72 Spriggs 2008; Roscoe 2009; Ravn 2011.

73 Ravn 2011, 717–20.

74 Wylie 1988; Wylie 2002.

75 Itkonen 2005, 1–2; See also Ascher 1961, 317–18; Wylie 2002, 140–41.

76 Andrén 1998; Morris 2000; Näsman 1988; Ravn 1997; Ravn 2003.

to do so in what we perceive as a theoretically neutral manner. Sure, ancient authors were “biased”—they were rich white men with the time to sit around and write—but their texts are taken to contain seams of observational ore, and we can mine them carefully for nuggets of applicable data, as has been shown for the identification and interpretation of Roman housing at Pompeii and Dura Europos.⁷⁷ Textually-derived room names (such as *alae*, *fauces*, *cubiculum*, and *tablinum*) were applied to archaeologically recovered houses, in a form of analogical inference that creates the perception that there is a direct correlation between the material remains and the Vitruvian label. It creates the artifice of an ancient, authoritative interpretative model for how Roman housing functioned, yet is entirely modern in its construction. We want rooms to have single functions because we perceive human domestic arrangements as having an undercurrent of material universality, and our labels reflect that. The evidence, however, frequently suggests something else entirely.

Frazer and Pausanias, in their way, understood this. They both use comparison and analogy to try to explain their perceptions of culture and human behaviour. Pausanias is comparing myth, ritual, and the places they occur across the Greek mainland to highlight the rich diversity of the Hellenic experience—in a world made by Rome, he attempts to show why being Greek still matters.⁷⁸ His tools for doing this are autopsy, ethnography, and analogy.

One of the curious features of Pausanias’ text is that while he is writing in the second century CE, at the height of the Antonine Roman empire, very little of Rome makes it into his work. The vast majority of monuments, sites, and practices he describes originate in the Archaic or Classical periods, occasionally down into the Hellenistic, with only occasional forays into his contemporary landscape.⁷⁹ He promotes a conscious archaism within his work—it would be as if I produced a travel guide of London that focused only on the Victorian architecture while only occasionally making allowances for modern streets, skyscrapers, or twentieth- and twenty-first century history. Pausanias is not the only author doing this at this time—the entire Second Sophistic was an intellectual movement predicated on looking backwards—but it does make his text much more than a simple travelogue. It points to the “writerliness” of

77 Allison 2001. This practice at Pompeii begins Mau’s “ideal plan,” which, in fairness, was only ever meant to represent features common to houses (Mau 1904). For Dura, see Baird 2014. On bias, see Hopkins 1978, 183.

78 Elsner 2001; Torelli 2001; Stewart 2013.

79 Elsner 2001; Hutton 2005, 181–183.

Pausanias' broader project and his wider anxieties about what it meant to be "Greek" in Roman times.⁸⁰

Frazer is intent within his commentary of Pausanias on showing why the ancient text is still relevant, not just in its application to archaeological research (though that too is clear from his text), but in teasing out how ritual pervades human society. His commentary is explicitly cross-cultural; both it and *The Golden Bough* are littered with references to each other.⁸¹ We might separate his works into "classics" or "anthropology," but it seems clear that Frazer spent his life trying not to.⁸²

Neither anthropology nor the classics had a single point of origin, and neither has had a single stream of development.⁸³ However, notions of comparativism and autopsy pervaded both disciplines at the close of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth; both spoke to "deeper" aspects of human culture and society, both afforded a universality to specific elements of culture. It was possible at that moment to see the truth in Marett's statement that "there is not the slightest reason (unless prejudice be accounted reason) why conflict should arise between the interests thus led to intermingle."⁸⁴ In the person of Frazer, we can see something of the intersection of anthropology, classics, and classical archaeology. It is also possible to see still, in the twenty-first century, the disciplines of classics and anthropology as standing Janus-like, looking in different directions as regards culture, but joined all the same. The place of autopsy, comparison, and analogy within the disciplines serves as a common thread, even if that thread runs in different directions.

This too, however, is a selective reading of the evidence. Much has been omitted. Thus, while it is possible to see points of overlap, indebtedness, and close collaboration, it is also possible to spin a developmental and historical narrative that is the opposite. But to have that argument, we must compare both similarity and difference, and engage with evidence acquired through first-hand investigation—and in that comparison, in that acquisition, we are all walking with Pausanias and Frazer.

80 Swain 1996.

81 MacCormack 2010, 305.

82 Ackerman 1990, 128–29.

83 Bošković 2007.

84 Marett 1908, 3.

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Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, and the Oral Theory

Thérèse A. de Vet

Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) is best known for his essay *The Gift*, first published in *l'Année sociologique deuxième série* in 1923–24. Since about one-third of *The Gift* examines gift-giving, reciprocity, and early law in Rome and Germany and their Indo-European roots, it appealed greatly to classicists, especially after it appeared in translation in the Anglophone world (with an introduction by the British anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard) in 1954. However, Mauss' impact on anthropology and indirectly on classics went well beyond his many reviews in *l'Année sociologique* and his essay on gift-giving: his informal instructions on how to do fieldwork influenced many generations of French anthropologists and, coincidentally, also an American graduate student in classics. Milman Parry, who studied with Mauss in Paris in the 1920s, would go on to play a formative role in the study of orality in the field of classics.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first part, I provide an overview of Mauss' early life and work, and explore the influence of “l'oncle,” as Émile Durkheim was affectionately referred to by Mauss and his circle. In the second part, I provide a historical overview and a brief outline of his most influential essay, *The Gift*, published in 1925. In the last part, I discuss the hitherto unrecognized influence of Mauss, his colleagues, and his Institut d'ethnologie on the American Homerist Milman Parry and his formulation of the Oral Theory.¹

Marcel Mauss, Durkheim, and *l'Année Sociologique*

Marcel Mauss was born in 1872, in Épinal, a small town in the Vosges region, the same town where his uncle (on his mother's side) Émile Durkheim, the

1 In keeping with the scope of this volume, I will limit my chapter to roughly the first half of the twentieth century. For readers curious about Mauss' later influence, I refer to the recent collection of essays *The Gift in Antiquity* edited by Michael Satlow (2013). Editor's note: The editor would like to acknowledge and thank Steve Lansing and Sandra Blakely, whose generous and diligent attention helped realize Thérèse's vision and bring this chapter to publication.

founder of French sociology (and anthropology), was born 14 years earlier. After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 much of the territory was annexed by Germany: Mauss and Durkheim's family opted for French nationality. Both Durkheim and Mauss studied in France and, although Jewish, considered themselves French. Mauss volunteered in the French army during WW I. He served as an interpreter with the Eighteenth Division of Britain and from 1916 on was attached to the Fifth Australian Division.² Durkheim's son, André, died in a Bulgarian hospital of the wounds he received in a retreat of the army from Serbia in 1915.³ Durkheim's grief no doubt contributed to his death two years later.

After successfully finishing his studies at the Lycée in Épinal, Mauss went to Bordeaux in 1890, where his uncle had taken a position at the first teacher training college in France. Expectations had been for Mauss to apply to the École nationale supérieure, like his uncle—where the intelligentsia and future leaders of French society were educated—but he resisted the pressure. His interests were in philosophy and religion, a focus that stayed with him for his entire life. After obtaining his degree of *agrégé de philosophie* in 1895, he obtained some travel grants and spent time in Germany, the Netherlands, and Britain. On his return he settled in Paris, beginning his studies in ethnology, and in Sanskrit with Sylvain Lévy. At age 28 Mauss obtained the chair of "Religions of People without Civilization," at the École pratique des hautes études (1901).

Mauss' interest in religion was shared by many. In the second half of the nineteenth century, religion had become a hot topic, thanks mostly to the translations of the *Vedas* by Max Müller; the discovery (and translation) of Babylonian, Assyrian, and Egyptian texts; as well as the intensification of colonial exploits and the accompanying missionary efforts. Then there were the exciting excavations in Troy of Heinrich Schliemann, which called attention to the possible links between Homeric poetry and historical events. There was also the work of Freud, which foregrounded the power of myth and the universality of human experience. The study of the history of religion became so popular that at the time of the World's Fair of 1900 in Paris an international congress on the topic took place.

It was both through the work of British anthropologists and the introduction written by Claude Lévi-Strauss to Mauss' posthumous work *Anthropologie et sociologie* (1950) that Mauss' *oeuvre* became better known among American scholars. This may seem odd because Mauss had lectured at American

² Bert 2012, 126.

³ Fournier 1994, 380.

universities, and invitations were frequently extended to American professors in return; nevertheless, the impact of his work was delayed. For instance, in 1926 Mauss went on a speaking tour of the US, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. It was a heavy schedule: New York, Boston, New Haven, Chicago, Washington, and Philadelphia. He had meetings with Franz Boas, Bronisław Malinowski, Edward Sapir, the sociologists F. H. Giddings, E. Burgess, Robert Farris and Robert Park, the philosopher John Dewey, the political science scholar Charles Edward Merriam, and the economist L. C. Marshall, as well as many others. He also visited the major natural history museums and studied how American research institutions were organized and connected. The emphasis on research in the USA drew his attention, especially at the University of Chicago because research was integrated with “la formation d’une nation.”⁴ The emergence of social cohesion as an important concept, and how it was being pursued in the USA deeply impressed him.

To appreciate the impact of Mauss’ work one needs to understand the profound influence of his uncle Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) not only on Mauss himself but also on French anthropology and British social anthropology. Durkheim’s interests were very different from those of the social scientists who had come before, such as Auguste Comte, whose *Three Stages of Human Evolution*, Durkheim thought was mistaken, or the followers of Broca, whose Société d’anthropologie de Paris concerned itself with what we would now call physical anthropology, Darwinism, social Darwinism, and racialist studies.⁵ Durkheim and Mauss seem to have avoided the entire series of Broca societies, hardly commenting on them. Comte, however, did attract their attention: Durkheim explained in his inaugural lecture in Bordeaux (1888), that Comte had been hampered by the lack of good ethnographic science. According to Durkheim, it was now clear that there were many different paths of human evolution.⁶ In 1931, Mauss explained:

Nous sommes tous partis d’une idée un peu romantique de la souche originaire des sociétés: l’amorphisme complet de la horde, puis du clan; les communismes qui en découlent. Nous avons mis peut-être plusieurs décades à nous défaire, je ne dis pas de toute l’idée, mais d’une partie notable de ces idées.⁷

4 Fournier 1994, 530–31.

5 Comte recognized three phases in the evolution of societies: a theological stage, a metaphysical one, and finally a positivist one (secular and scientific). For Broca’s influence and the work of his followers, see Wartelle 2004.

6 Karady 1981, 168.

7 Mauss 1969, 13.

Durkheim—and later Mauss—was not interested so much in outlining the steps of the evolution of societies as in investigating how societies cohere. He believed that if we could look at more primitive (in the sense of “first” or “archaic”) societies, we might discover the secret of societal cohesion.⁸

Social cohesion was an important issue in France at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. In his doctoral dissertation (1893), Durkheim defined the difference between traditional and modern societies as follows: individuals in modern societies collaborate in the same way the parts of the human body work together, each body part having a specialized role and function. This collaboration he called “organic.” In primitive societies, however, where everyone had more or less the same kind of life and position, solidarity was based on similarity. This solidarity he called “mechanical.” The greater the differentiation among individuals, the greater the need was for a regulating and governing body to achieve cohesion. Sociology should, therefore, study the total social facts or social interactions among individuals to understand how social cohesion worked. He laid out this approach in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895).

Durkheim's next book, *Le suicide* (1897), was written in collaboration with his nephew, Marcel Mauss, who had just joined him in Bordeaux. Mauss, in his early twenties at the time, was responsible for the sorting of the 26,000 records of suicides that had taken place in France between 1889 and 1891.⁹ In this book, Durkheim added a new concept “anomie,” which described the alienation felt by individuals when social norms were in flux.

Implied in the division of societies into two large classes (mechanical and organic) was the idea that the mechanical or tribal societies were “primitive” in the original sense of the word: “first” or “archaic.” It was understood that although such societies could be very sophisticated in their beliefs and practices, they were “oral” societies, and they could only be studied through direct observation. These societies would not have a textual tradition, so writing was what separated “us” from “them.” Writing, that is, was considered the critical social technology that separated primitive societies from their European investigators.¹⁰ The title of Mauss' chair, which he obtained in 1901 at

8 Here I argue against Satlow's (otherwise excellent) introduction to *The Gift in Antiquity*, in which he states that both Durkheim and Mauss followed the old evolutionary schema from “archaic” to “civilized” (Satlow 2013, 4).

9 Fournier 1994, 114–16. The raw data had been furnished by the head of judicial statistics; suicides were classified according to religion, age, gender, marital status, etc.

10 The idea that literacy marks the fundamental transition from primitive to modern societies remains contentious in anthropology; see Goody 1987.

l'École pratique des hautes études, was "chair of the religions of non-civilized peoples." Mauss considered the title baroque, stating in his inaugural lecture: "Il n'existe pas de peuples non civilisés."¹¹ One problem both Durkheim and Mauss faced over their careers was the suspicion by their colleagues that their "sociology of religion" was incompatible with Christianity.¹² Moreover, they were Jews.

The work with his uncle provided Mauss with clear choices for his own career. As he wrote in 1930, in a short *Mémoire* prepared for his friends to comment on when he made his second attempt at the Collège de France:

J'ai hésité dans mes années d'étudiant entre les études dites maintenant quantitatives (collaboration avec Durkheim), Suicide, Histoire des Villes, Emplacements Humains, dont un écho est mon travail sur Les Variations Saisonnieres, les études de droit (3 années) et celles de Sociologie Religieuse. C'est par goût philosophique et aussi par destination consciente que, sur l'indication de Durkheim, je me spécialisai dans la connaissance des faits religieux et m'y consacrai presque entièrement pour toujours. Durkheim fit pour moi son cours de Bordeaux sur les Origines de la Religion (1894–1895) et pour lui.¹³

After Mauss' travels in the Netherlands, Germany, and Britain, he settled in Paris. Here he began to collaborate with others and, at the same time, recruit them for *l'Année sociologique*, the publication started in 1898 by Durkheim to give greater visibility to the emerging new science of sociology. One such companion was Henri Hubert. Mauss met Hubert, whom he called his "jumeau de travail" or "work-twin," shortly after his year abroad, and together they explored and wrote the *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice* (1899) and *Esquisse d'une théorie générale de La Magie* (1903). Alone, Mauss wrote *La Prière* (1909), which was to be his dissertation. He withdrew it the day after submitting it for publication (it was later published posthumously). All of these essays provided pieces, or the earliest beginnings, for *The Gift*. "Nous decouvriions ensemble," he wrote, "le monde [de] l'humanité préhistorique, primitif, exotique, le monde sémitique et le monde indien, en plus du monde ancien et du monde chrétien

11 See Fournier 1994, 190 and 472–74, where the courses Mauss taught between 1920 and 1939 are listed. Each semester's course examined a different aspect of oral rituals worldwide.

12 Fournier 1994, 471.

13 Mauss 1979, 214.

que nous connaissions déjà.”¹⁴ At that time, “we furnished (“meublions”) the boxes (“cases”) of sociology with facts,” Mauss writes, “Part of the method was precisely to attach the facts of institution and structure to facts of *mentalité* and vice versa.”¹⁵

To better understand both Mauss and Durkheim it is necessary to highlight one of their most important methods in the investigation of societies. Both Durkheim and Mauss were in search of “faits totaux”:

le tout ensemble [qui nous permet de] ... percevoir l'essentiel, le mouvement du tout, l'aspect vivant, l'instant fugitif où la société prend, où les hommes prennent conscience sentimentale d'eux-mêmes et de leur situation vis-à-vis d'autrui. Il y a, dans cette observation concrète de la vie sociale, le moyen de trouver des faits nouveaux que nous commençons seulement à entrevoir. Rien à notre avis n'est plus urgent ni fructueux que cette étude des faits sociaux.¹⁶

These “faits sociaux” captured the *essence* of a society: it was better than a thousand subdivided observations pushed into separate categories, such as “rules of law, myths, values, and price.”¹⁷ The study of social cohesion was always foremost. For Mauss, as well as for Durkheim, religion was one way to achieve social cohesion; for Mauss, “gift giving” became another.

A large part of Mauss' time during the early years of his life was taken up by the work he did for *L'Année sociologique*. Over the years of this publication, Mauss noted in his (unpublished) 1930 *mémoire*, that he had contributed “2,500 octavo pages out of the 10,000–11,000 pages of the fourteen volumes published or in print.”¹⁸ Mauss specialized in writing book reviews. In addition to Hebrew, Latin, ancient Greek and Persian, and Sanskrit, Mauss, unusually for a Frenchman of the time, also read multiple modern languages: German,

14 Mauss 1979, 215.

15 Mauss 1979, 215.

16 Mauss 1925 (2012), 236.

17 Mauss 1925 (2012), 236.

18 Mauss 1979, 212. Mauss includes here the pages written for the “new” series of the *Année*, which he had restarted in 1925 after a ten-year hiatus. The first volume of the new *Année* contained his *Essai sur le don*. In Marcel 2004: “Du vivant de Durkheim sa contribution à la revue était la plus importante de toutes, de 1898 à 1913, (4 mémoires originaux et 326 comptes rendus; contre, par exemple, respectivement 2 et 272 à mettre au compte d'Hubert; 1 et 174, chez Simiand; aucun et 75 chez Halbwachs; 3 et 96 pour Bouglé; 1 et 124 chez H. Bourgin).”

Dutch, Russian, and English. One advantage of writing these book reviews was that Mauss had access to the most recent French and international publications. Fournier in his *Bibliographie des oeuvres de Mauss*, for instance, lists 37 reviews in 1899, and I count 85 more or less for the year 1925, for the first volume of the second series of *L'Année*. Some of these *comptes rendus* review two or three books by the same author, for instance, Frazer's *Golden Bough* and *Folklore in the Old Testament* in 1925. That same year there are four reviews of the work of Boas. These 85 reviews were *in addition* to *The Gift*, an essay on a text by Posidonius published elsewhere, an *in memoriam* for Durkheim and his collaborators, and a commemorative one-page essay on the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of Saint-Simon.¹⁹ Mauss' memory was excellent, and he could present at a moment's notice data and information from the books he had reviewed. His students were in awe.²⁰

As the titles of the essays listed above suggest, Mauss' interests were wide-ranging; as we shall see in the following section this chapter, he used both recent ethnographic findings and sources from classical literature to make his points. Greek and Latin were still taught intensively at the newly established (1880) Lycées, and enough was learned there about classical literature ("que nous connaissions déjà") and languages to require no further instruction at the university level.²¹

Essai sur le don

Mauss' *Essai sur le don* has been translated into English at least three times. Laudatory prefaces were provided for two of these translations by Evans-Pritchard (1954) and Mary Douglas (1990), scholars whose own enormous influence in British and American anthropology helped bring *The Gift* to prominence. While the English editions of *The Gift* focused on its broad relevance to anthropology, Mauss was at pains to emphasize the relevance to the contemporary French labour movement. Both Mauss and l'oncle were interested in contemporary French politics, but Mauss chose to participate directly. Durkheim had been—like almost every French scholar of Jewish

19 Fournier 1994, 810–17.

20 Fournier 1994, 603.

21 Mauss 1979, 215. For further information on what was taught and why, and on educational reforms in France, see Chervel 1988; Denis-Laroque 2006; Post 2008.

descent—active in l'affaire Dreyfus, which played itself out between 1894 and 1906.²² But Mauss went beyond being a sympathizer. Together with the French Workers Party, in 1893 Mauss and some of his friends invited Jean Jaurès, the recently elected socialist Député, to participate in a conference where Jaurès, a friend of Durkheim's since their students days, proceeded to praise the work of Durkheim. That same year fifty other socialists were elected to the Chambre des Députés, profoundly changing politics in France.²³

Somewhat later (in 1898), Mauss came to see his role more as a financial and intellectual contributor to the socialist cause than as a participant in direct action.²⁴ Nevertheless, the issue of social cohesion remained supreme for him. In the final part of his essay *The Gift*, we find out why it was written: in support of the French labour movement.²⁵ The original and often unrecognized intent of *The Gift* was to prove, in its last section, that contemporary workers were “owed” the “counter-prestation” or “return gift” of pensions and care, having spent their working lives for the benefit of their work-givers and society. A pension was a *moral* obligation. Such “socialist” ideas were very much the trend at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the historical backdrop of Mauss' career is significant: there was the aforementioned Dreyfus Affair, the assassination in 1914 of Jaurès (to whom Mauss was very close), a world war and a shaky peace treaty with Germany, a communist revolution in Russia, a peasant revolution in Mexico, and continued social unrest in France itself.²⁶ The essay was a plea to improve French workers' circumstances and to influence social laws in France, and, if at all possible, to prevent future wars. Its publication in 1925 coincided with the coming to power of the socialist party, the same party that also “gave” Mauss the Institut d'ethnologie that same year, something he had been asking for since 1913. More on the Institut follows below.

The layout of *The Gift* is quite simple. Although Mauss does not say so explicitly, the societies examined all belong to the category “mechanical” with pre-market economies. The *essai* begins with a series of examples taken from societies in the Pacific North West of the United States and Oceania. Both

22 The scandal exposed the injustices and antisemitism of the political and military powers of the Third French Republic and revealed the power of the press and public opinion in correcting these abuses. See Bredin 1986.

23 Fournier 1994, 60.

24 Fournier 1994, 78–79.

25 Mauss 1925 (2007), 4, 241.

26 “Ma vie à moi a été enrichie de plusieurs bonheurs incomparables. J'en ai vécu toute la première partie auprès de trois grands hommes, et me suis voué à eux: Durkheim, Jaurès, Sylvain Lévi” (Mauss 1969, 544).

societies practise a kind of gift exchange, the *potlatch* and the *kula* respectively, which Mauss argues are based on similar concepts. Next, he analyses classical sources, studying Roman law and traces of gift-giving and the obligation to return gifts, and including some footnotes about ancient Greece. Then follows a section on ancient Indic civilization and a few paragraphs on Germanic and Celtic law and customs. The final section is a “deciphering” of all the accumulated material, where the universal aspect of “obligation to make return gifts”—firmly tied to giving and receiving—is explored. The outcome of Mauss’ investigation provided support for his argument that even modern workers—living in an organic society—are “owed” a pension as a return gift for all their efforts on behalf of the larger society. So, *not* “charity” but a humane and gracious recognition of their value to society, a demonstration of social cohesion at its finest. Moreover, Mauss shows throughout the essay that hostilities between individuals, tribes, groups, and even nations will cease if we can all revert to, or behave like, the pre-market societies he describes.

Finally, evolutionary ideas in a mild form underlie the entire *essai*. For both Durkheim and Mauss, gone are the detailed steps or phases which had long explained the evolution of societies. What remained was a system related to the mechanical and organic cohesion of societies, in which “mechanical” societies were the oldest and longest-lived phase. The mechanical societies were “pre-market” economies, societies that immediately preceded capitalist societies and monetization of labour.

This shift from the stadial model of the evolution of human societies (until then quite common) to the Durkheimian synchronic depiction of societies described above (mechanical v. organic) is already evident in the *essai*. In his examination of societies of different time periods in *The Gift*, Mauss does not attempt to find an *earlier* manifestation of gift-giving or reciprocity which would have *evolved* into the current model. It is rather

[en] considerant le tout ensemble que nous avons pu percevoir l'essentiel, le mouvement du tout, l'aspect vivant, l'instant fugitif où la société prend, où les hommes prennent conscience sentimentale d'eux mêmes et leur situation vis-à-vis d'autrui. ... Il faut ... observer ce qui est donné. Or, le donné c'est Rome, c'est Athènes, c'est le Français moyen, c'est le Mélanésien de telle ou telle île, et non pas la prière ou le droit en soi.²⁷

27 Mauss 1925 (2007), 236–37.

Mauss wants to understand the role of gifts in different societies, among those who live in societies which have mechanical solidarity and those who live in societies that have organic solidarity, like ours. His goal is to see whether a pattern can be identified that is explanatory or illuminating for both kinds of societies.

For his explanation of gift-giving and its competitive nature, Mauss relied on the research Franz Boas conducted among the Northwest indigenous American societies. Here he identified the core of Boas' descriptions of the *potlatch*, namely that the gift exchanges, and the obligation to return the gift of elaborate rituals and feasts, have a collective nature. Even though a chief might be in charge of the final distribution of goods, the goods were provided by the collectivity, the clan, the group, and its members.

A second society is also examined: that of the Trobriand Islanders and the surrounding islands of Micronesia and Melanesia. Here Mauss relied on the work of Malinowski, whom he admired as a researcher, but not as a theorist.²⁸ Malinowski had discovered the *kula* ring, a series of ritualized exchanges of ornamental artefacts undertaken by the Trobriand Islanders. One kind of object travelled in one direction, another in the opposite direction, in weeks-long voyages by canoe between the islands. The main point is that no one could keep the exchanged objects in their permanent possession: instead, there was an obligation to move them along. Besides the ritualized exchanges, other trades also took place, but they were closely linked to the exchange and prestige of the ritual objects, each of which had a special story of its origins and significance attached to it. In these exchanges, Mauss made an important observation: the objects *given* have a close connection to a person or a clan. Money, with its abstract value, according to Mauss, was not developed until much later when the link between persons and valuable objects was severed. He points out that in early Rome the first "moneys" were struck by *gentes*.²⁹

From these two types of very distant and very different societies, Mauss deduces one important rule:

ce symbole de la vie sociale—la permanence d'influence des choses échangées—ne fait que traduire assez directement la manière dont les sous-groupes de ces sociétés segmentées, de type archaïque, sont constamment imbriqués les uns dans les autres, et *sentent qu'ils se doivent tout* (my emphasis).³⁰

28 Fournier 1994, 530n4.

29 Mauss 1925 (2007), 105–6n1.

30 Mauss 1925 (2007), 127.

In his concluding paragraph to Chapter 2, Mauss establishes the existence of obligations and rights, not necessarily spelled out in laws, which persisted in societies with pre-market economies:

[Ces faits] nous permettent de concevoir que *ce principe de l'échange-don a dû être celui des sociétés qui ont dépassé la phase de la "prestation totale"* (de clan à clan, et de famille à famille) *et qui cependant ne sont pas encore parvenues au contrat individuel pur, au marché où roule l'argent, à la vente proprement dite et surtout à la notion du prix estimé en monnaie pesée et titrée.*³¹

Mauss is very careful to point out that these obligations and exchanges do not involve monetization. In the chapter that follows, Mauss finds the survival of these principles in "les droits anciens et les économies anciennes" (the subtitle of the chapter). It is this chapter that has attracted the attention of many classicists since it aims to find the characteristics of exchange and obligation in ancient Roman and Germanic law, and provides a commentary on the inalienable tie between "a thing" and a family or person. He writes:

Des institutions de ce type ont réellement fourni la transition vers nos formes, nos formes à nous, de droit et d'économie. Elles peuvent servir à expliquer historiquement nos propres sociétés.³²

Mauss admits the evidence for the ties between things and persons in Roman antiquity is tenuous, but by tying in classical Hindu (=Indo-European) customs, he strengthens his case. He finishes his argument in favour of a tight connection between past and present by looking at ancient Chinese Law:

Elle reconnaît le lien indissoluble de toute chose avec l'originel propriétaire. Même aujourd'hui, un individu qui a vendu un de ses biens, même meuble, garde toute sa vie durant, contre l'acheteur, une sorte de droit de 'pleurer son bien'.³³

We see how, step-by-step, Mauss brings the exotic topic of gift and counter-gift and its accompanying obligations closer to the present and our kind of society with a market economy. His concluding chapter begins with this observation:

31 Mauss 1925 (2007), 171.

32 Mauss 1925 (2007), 173.

33 Mauss 1925 (2007), 210.

Il est possible d'étendre ces observations à nos propres sociétés ... Les choses ont encore une valeur de sentiment en plus de leur valeur vénale, si tant est qu'il y ait des valeurs qui soient seulement de ce genre.³⁴

The morality and unwritten laws that underlie the customs and behaviour of the groups and individuals used by Mauss in *The Gift* provide the model for a future for us all. The possibility to achieve two goals is achieved: first, the recognition of what is owed to the workers of a society once they are old, sick, or out of work; and second, the attainment of world peace. The second goal is larger and more remote:

C'est ainsi que le clan, la tribu, les peuples ont su—et c'est ainsi que demain, dans notre monde dit civilisé, les classes et les nations et aussi les individus, doivent savoir—s'opposer sans se massacrer et se donner sans se sacrifier les uns aux autres.³⁵

Lest we forget, Mauss served four years of active service during WWI and saw many of his companions die.

The *essai* was translated into English at least three times, each time with an important foreword that situated the author (Mauss) in his context and provided the reader with an explanation of the work's importance. E. E. Evans-Pritchard emphasized Mauss' use of the concept "total": "The exchanges of archaic societies which he examines are total social movements or activities. They are at the same time economic, juridical, moral, aesthetic, religious, mythological and socio-morphological phenomena."³⁶ Mary Douglas, by contrast, emphasized the issues and views that separated French and British approaches to such topics as individualism and group solidarity.³⁷ For Douglas, *The Gift* "is a theory of social solidarity." For her, its legacy is that "for us, anthropologists, if we thought of the economy at all, [we] treated it almost as a separate aspect of society, and kinship as separate again, and religion as a final chapter at the end."³⁸ What Evans-Pritchard already noted, and what Claude Lévi-Strauss developed further in *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1949), is that the exchange of men and women is "the most important

34 Mauss 1925 (2007), 213.

35 Mauss 1925 (2007), 240.

36 Evans-Pritchard 1954, vii.

37 Douglas 1990.

38 Douglas 1990, x.

among the gifts in a total symbolic system.”³⁹ In other words, Mauss provides a comprehensive model for the study of societies, including our own. The “faits totaux” approach, I suggest, found one expression in the work of Clifford Geertz, whose “thick description” similarly included multiple aspects of single events. The recombination of all the strands described by Geertz served to have the reader grasp the complexity of a different society.

Mauss’ essay also influenced Mary Douglas in another way: “I myself made an attempt to apply the theory of the gift to our consumption behaviour, arguing that it is much more about giving than the economists realize.”⁴⁰ Unfortunately, she realized, the necessary information that could have been collected from census and survey records was not available; this was information that would have been collected if more attention had been paid to Mauss’ theory. The *Nachleben* of Mauss’ work also continues firmly in classics—in a corner not usually recognized as having been influenced by his work: the study of orality. The examination of this aspect of his work takes us to the next part of this chapter.

Mauss and the Oral Theory

So far, we have seen how Mauss used examples from pre-literate Greece and Rome to strengthen his arguments about the “primitives” of the times. He used classical antiquity to make the point that even though we might not realize it, many pre-literate customs were greatly imbricated in our modern culture. But the reverse also happened: some classicists used the latest ethnographies to acquire new insights about, for instance, pre-literate (“archaic”) Greece or Rome. The master of this practice was, of course, Mauss’ friend Sir James Frazer with *The Golden Bough*. Classicists were eager to use newly discovered ethnographic data to make *their* points. Ethnography was particularly useful for the analysis of early archaic Greek society, the time before the arrival of the alphabet and before the Greeks discovered rationality and became the cradle of Western civilization. In other words, it was acceptable to Frazer and others of his school of thought to suggest that archaic Greece could have had things in common with other “primitive” societies.⁴¹

39 Douglas 1990, xv.

40 Douglas 1990, xv.

41 This was also controversial among classicists, many of whom did not find it acceptable at all. See Ackerman 2008, 143–57.

One very old puzzle that classicists had long aimed to solve was the “Homeric Question” about the authorship of the Homeric poems. Even the Greeks themselves wondered how such long poems as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* could have been transmitted, and who Homer was, and where he must have lived. Many ancient cities claimed him. When eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars tackled the problem, instead of examining myths surrounding the origins of Homer, they asked when literacy developed in ancient Greece. They assumed that writing was the only viable method of transmission for both poems. Moreover, the poems are in an older and mixed dialect of Greek (not the Greek of Plato or the tragedians), so it was logical to approach the Question through language and literacy. It was assumed—and some ancient Greeks believed this too—that before the arrival of the alphabet many performers existed, each knowing a piece of the story. Finally, with the arrival of the alphabet, the poems were put together in the order we have them and recorded in writing.

In 1924, Milman Parry came to Paris to pursue his doctorate. An American graduate student in classics, Parry’s master’s thesis (1923) at Berkeley had focused on the role of epithets in Homeric poetry. In Paris, he hoped to answer an important part of the Homeric Question: How could lengthy poems have been preserved so long in an older form of Greek, and how were they recorded in writing? Parry arrived at the *moment juste*: ethnology was taking off in France, and scholars in all fields were absorbing and adding to its body of knowledge. The main conduit for researchers of all backgrounds was the Institut d’ethnologie, founded by Mauss and his collaborators. 1925 was not only the year that Mauss published his *Essai sur le don* in *L’Année sociologique* (restarted that same year under the title of *deuxième série*) but also the year that the Institut d’ethnologie was finally approved and funded. Already before WWI, Mauss had proposed the foundation of an institute or bureau modelled on the Bureau of Indian affairs as it existed in the USA, but his request had remained unfulfilled. One of the problems was that there were already plenty of different institutions that taught or involved anthropological subjects: the School of Anthropology; chairs of anthropology (in museums); the Institute for “Religions of non-civilized peoples” in the École pratique des hautes études (the chair that Mauss occupied); the Institute of Prehistory at the Collège de France; the Institute for Human Palaeontology, funded by the Prince of Monaco; the museum of ethnography at the Trocadéro; the Colonial School; and the School for Modern Oriental Languages.⁴²

42 Fournier 1994, 501–6.

But the stars aligned in 1925. A new socialist government came to power, and the loyal university members received the Institut d'ethnologie as their reward.⁴³ Funding was provided by the ministries for the Colonies. The goals for the new institute were to "organize the study of the ethnography in the colonies, and to publish."⁴⁴ The teaching promoted both fieldwork and theoretical work and was coordinated with already existing instructional establishments.

The fame of one of the professors, Lucien Lévi-Bruhl (1857–1939), a philosopher by training and the author of *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910) and *La mentalité primitive* (1922), helped to obtain the funding. Lévi-Bruhl was the oldest of the three founders, already semi-retired but very energetic. Then there was Mauss, and another colleague, Paul Rivet, a physical anthropologist, who was connected to the laboratory of anthropology at the Museum of Natural History, who would go on to become its director. Between the three, they had connections to most of the institutes and schools listed above. A supervisory committee was also created: Antoine Meillet, professor of linguistics at the Collège de France; Maurice Delafosse, governor of the colonies and professor at the School of modern oriental languages; and the archaeologist Louis Finot, also a professor at the Collège de France and director of the French School for the Far East.⁴⁵

Henceforth, French scholars undertook research in the French colonies, important work that until that time had been left to foreigners (mostly Germans).⁴⁶ There was a sense of urgency, a fear that many of the peoples to be studied were on the verge of disappearing. To publish the most recent discoveries and facts, to have these verified by field studies, and to send out ethnographic missions were, said Mauss, "our ultimate responsibility: to science, to our country, and to those populations themselves."⁴⁷ The Institut also aimed to instruct colonial personnel: administrators, doctors, missionaries, all capable of gathering good ethnographic observations. Ultimately, the Institut had the double aim of moving the science of ethnography forward and making the new findings available to colonial administration when required. This latter aim was emphasized since the greater part of the Institut's budget came from colonial coffers (from Indochina, Equatorial Africa, and later Algeria and the Moroccan protectorate).

43 Fournier 1994, 503.

44 Fournier 1994, 504–5.

45 Fournier 1994, 506.

46 See Mauss' 1913 report on the state of ethnography in France as compared to other European countries: "l'Ethnographie en France et à l'étranger" (Mauss 1969, 395–434).

47 Fournier 1994, 509.

Mauss' goal for the Institut was *not* "d'enseigner l'ethnographie, mais de la faire."⁴⁸ Instruction began in 1926 with 20 or so students. The Institut was very successful: the following year 67 students enrolled, and the year after, 89. By the early 1930s, enrollment hovered between 129 and 145. Among the many French students, there were also foreigners.⁴⁹ In French universities and at the various institutes, the disciplines were not as neatly separated, as they were in the USA, which facilitated borrowing and cross-fertilization. The ethnology courses taught by Mauss, for instance, would often be taken by students whose main coursework was in philosophy (students such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Pierre Bourdieu, at a later date). Jean-Pierre Vernant was one of the few classicists among Mauss' later students, although there was a sprinkling of archaeologists. In fact, "the degree granted by the Institut became an optional component of the graduate degree in philosophy and later in sociology."⁵⁰ The Institut

became best known as the breeding ground of the new, empirically-based French ethnological school ... [Its foundation on] Durkheimian social theory was instrumental in the reappraisal of the significance, as an object of science, of archaic societies considered as a definitely *low cultural object*.⁵¹

Mauss was in charge of most of the teaching, and specifically, the course on fieldwork methods.⁵² His "Instructions sommaires pour les collecteurs d'objets ethnographiques" was created for this course and for the students setting off to do fieldwork.⁵³ The sheets were mimeographed and distributed.⁵⁴ Mauss was

48 Fournier 1994, 504.

49 Fournier 1994, 597n2.

50 Karady 1981, 172.

51 Karady 1981, 171. Emphasis in the original. Karady continues: "nineteenth-century scholarship had been resolutely ethno-centric and elitist, concentrating exclusively on 'high' civilizations and in general on objects endowed with a noble cultural status due to a long historical process of consecration."

52 For instance, in the academic year 1931–32, he taught *Instructions d'ethnographie descriptive*, 37 class sessions. In comparison, ten others taught between 5–10 classes during that same period (*Annales de l'université de Paris* 1933, 23). The *American Anthropologist* of April 1926 also announced the classes that would be taught at the new institute, in its section "Discussion and Correspondence" (University of Paris 1926). Mauss was also scheduled to teach "Australian Rites; Relations of Domestic and Social Organization and Religion (Sudan)."

53 Karady 1981, 176n29. Karady adds that "more than a 100 field trips were sponsored: in Africa (50), the Americas (30), Oceania (6), and Europe (12)."

54 "Depuis leur impression en mai 1928, l'Institut a distribué quarante-cinq questionnaires linguistiques avec un numéro d'ordre à des voyageurs, explorateurs, missionnaires,

the French ethnography expert: in April 1928, on the occasion of the first post-war meeting of French and German scholars in neutral Davos, he taught a seminar described as follows:

M. Mauss rend compte de l'état actuel des connaissances ethnographiques. Les méthodes d'observation intensive se sont perfectionnées considérablement avec l'emploi de la statistique, de la photographie, de la cinématographie, du phonogramme, de la philologie, etc.⁵⁵

At a later date (1929–1930), a 60 + page summary was created from the notes of two students, one of them a librarian at the Musée du Trocadéro. In 1947, this longer summary was published without having been reviewed by Mauss; however, as Florence Weber points out, by that time these fieldwork methods were already out of date.⁵⁶ These questionnaires reveal what researchers considered important and what they were told to look for. Once it became clear that theoretical work in sociology required a lot of data, such questionnaires for fieldwork became all the rage. For instance, the linguist Marcel Cohen created one for linguistic enquiry in 1928 that was specifically aimed at travellers, not linguists. It defined the different ways to record a language; the methods of phonetic notation; the use of instruments; and the development of a linguistic atlas. Cohen emphasized the use of technology:

Le phonographe d'enregistrement, dont les dimensions sont de plus en plus réduites, est de moins en moins difficile à transporter en bon état.... En effet les progrès techniques sont très rapides. On peut déjà enregistrer directement soit sur des disques très résistants soit sur des films; ... Se renseigner auprès du Laboratoire de phonétique, à la Sorbonne. Le laboratoire de phonétique de l'Université de Hambourg suit aussi de près ces questions.⁵⁷

fctionnaires coloniaux des diverses contrées du monde" (*Annales de l'université de Paris* 1929). Two questionnaires had already been returned at the time of writing: one with a Basque informant, and one on Abyssinia (*Annales de l'université de Paris* 1929, 420).

55 Fournier 1994, 563n3. Mauss is supposed to have met Einstein there, who was also in charge of teaching a seminar, as was Jean Piaget.

56 In the forward to Mauss 1925 (2007), ix. See also Fournier 1994, 597. The summary appeared in print again in 2002.

57 Cohen 1928, 56–57.

But he did not neglect the obvious, either: “Si on écrit à l'encre, prendre garde à la pluie, avoir de très bons buvards.”⁵⁸

In 1902, Mauss had created a questionnaire for research in French Indochina, based on earlier questionnaires from 1841, 1860, and 1883. He also supervised one for the big research project, the two-year long voyage from Dakar to Djibouti, financed by the Institut and the Rockefeller Foundation in the late 1920s. That project was under the leadership of Marcel Griaule, a young, up-and-coming Africanist at the time.⁵⁹ The *Questionnaire* designed by Mauss advised fieldworkers to take note of oral performance, calling attention to the “formulaic nature” of the poetry:

La transmission par le rythme et par la formule est la seule garantie de perpétuité de la littérature orale, la poésie collective s'impose à tous.⁶⁰

La présence du rythme engendre la répétition; la forme primitive du vers est la répétition du même vers. Mais la répétition peut offrir des variantes, par l'allitération et l'assonance.

La formule est parfois pauvre, mais elle est imprégnée d'un nombre considérable d'autres éléments, elle contient parfois le mythe d'une représentation dramatique.

Lorsqu'on écouterait un conte, on prêterait attention au moment où le récitant prononcerait de ces formules généralement chantées, sur un chant qui peut être très faible. Il faut chercher la poésie là où nous ne la mettons pas, il faut la chercher partout. Il existe des codes rythmés (code radé en Indochine, loi des Douze Tables).

L'effet de la poésie n'est pas seulement physique, mais aussi moral et religieux. Les différentes parties du chœur grec sont chantées dans des langages spécifiques. Les modes sont des phrases musicales typiques qui s'enchaînent suivant un ordre déterminé; la psalmodie hébraïque de la Bible se compose de trente-deux modes.

⁵⁸ Cohen 1928, 75.

⁵⁹ Rumours of its forthcoming publication can be found in a review of a related book, the questionnaire by Marcel Cohen, Mauss' friend and colleague. The reviewer, after listing a number of questionnaires, adds: “On peut leur adjoindre, en attendant celui de M. Mauss” (in Gaspardone 1928). See also Bert 2012, 161–98.

⁶⁰ This and the following quotations from the manual of ethnography by Mauss (1926 (1947), 88–89).

Mauss (and his colleagues) were very aware of the collective nature of oral poetry: its high content of formulae, its emergence in unexpected places, its use of “specialized” languages. It is also different from written poetry, the kind that the fieldworkers or researchers would be most familiar with:

La littérature orale obéit à des règles différentes de celles qu’observe la littérature écrite; elle a des privilèges différents, parce qu’on y cherche normalement le rythme et la composition.⁶¹

La poésie faite pour être lue est moins parfaite que la poésie composée pour être récitée.

The author adds one final caveat: “On ne cherchera pas le texte original, parce qu’il n’en existe pas.”⁶²

Besides exciting developments in ethnology, linguistics, and anthropology, a lot was going on in Paris during the 1920s and 1930s: it was a period of what Fournier called “une grande effervescence.”⁶³ It was a place for American expatriates, and a city full of music, dance, art, and literature. *Le jazz* was popular, among the members of Mauss’ group. Mauss himself also defended Debussy, whose works were scorned by many at the time.⁶⁴ Many in Mauss’ circle were friends of the likes of Picasso and Giacometti. Mauss himself knew Picasso and admired his work, even writing an *hommage* to the artist in the journal *Documents*.⁶⁵ There were art exhibitions, and exhibitions of ethnic art collected by the many fieldworkers. No longer were the works of African artists, for instance, looked down upon as expressions of an inferior kind; on the contrary, they were appreciated. Mauss was pleased that people had learned to discern the beauty of these objects which must have appeared so strange.

It was into this highly charged and interconnected intellectual and artistic world that the young American classicist Milman Parry (1902–35) arrived to continue his studies. His master’s thesis at Berkeley was on the epithets in Homer: were they used because of their meaning or because of the requirements of the meter? Having been denied a scholarship in the USA to proceed to the PhD, he had chosen to come to France, aiming to work with famous French classicists, like Victor Bérard, a Hellenist and politician, who had translated

61 This and the following quotation from the manual of ethnography by Mauss (1926 (1947), 88–89).

62 Mauss 1926 (1947), 88–89.

63 Fournier 1994, 501ff.

64 Condominas, 1972.

65 Fournier 1994, 612–18.

the *Odyssey* and had many other interests. In 1930, the year before his death, Bérard published *La resurrection d'Homère*. Bérard, however, was not available, and Parry enlisted Aimé Puech as his advisor. Another reason for coming to France was that its universities were cheap at the time, and France was welcoming to foreign students.⁶⁶ Right after WWI, the Society of Friends of Parisian Universities had started the *cours de civilisation française*, with the specific goal of spreading French culture. Parry arrived in 1924 and, we are told, spent his first year learning French in preparation for enrolling in the courses he wanted.

We must assume that Parry subsequently took the required courses—little is known about his Parisian years. He had absorbed the Durkheimian separation of societies into organic and mechanical by the time of his thesis defence, *L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère: Essai sur un problème de style Homérique*. He saw that the “traditional society” that he had identified as Homeric society had *by necessity* to be an “oral society” too. The scholar who brought this to his attention was the linguist Antoine Meillet, a member of his committee and director (since 1925) of the École des hautes études and a student of Ferdinand de Saussure. Also present was a guest, a visiting Yugoslav linguist and professor at Prague University, Matthias Murko.⁶⁷ Murko was also interested in oral poetry and had made various trips to Yugoslavia to collect oral performances from both Christian and Muslim performers, both literate and illiterate. Moreover, Murko had made *sound recordings*, a very tricky and complicated business at the time. As we have seen already above, Mauss' students engaged in fieldwork were always encouraged to use new technologies like film and sound recordings.

Until that point, Parry had relied on philological investigations to solve the “Homeric Question,” just as earlier scholars had approached the question. The new French scholarship and the work of Murko suggested fieldwork as a possibly persuasive and fruitful source: if it could be discovered how non-literate singers performed long poems, and how others could learn from them, that would be further evidence for how the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had been composed. Memorization, it was believed, could only begin once there was a *written* text. Parry made two fieldtrips to the (former) Yugoslavia and published a series of articles. A book was in preparation or planned at the

66 There was a monetary crisis in the early twenties in France: in 1921, the exchange rate stood at 11 francs to the dollar, and a year or so later, it had fallen to 24. In the spring of 1924, Mauss himself published seven articles on monetary speculation and exchange in the newspaper *Le Populaire* (Fournier 1994, 450–58).

67 The whole story is told in more detail in my article “Parry in Paris: Structuralism, Historical Linguistics, and the Oral Theory” (De Vet 2005).

time of his death. He left an outline and several pages which were used as the basis for the work of his student Albert Lord, who used the fieldwork data first to complete requirements for his own dissertation and then later for the book *The Singer of Tales*.

Since Parry's career was so short, his findings can be summarized in a few lines. We can recognize many features of Mauss' *Questionnaire* in Parry and Lord's work. It is useful here to turn to the work of John Foley, a student of Albert Lord's, for a summary of Parry and Lord's work.⁶⁸ Foley's numerous publications take as their point of departure Parry and Lord's work, mainly the formulation of the "oral-formulaic theory," which claims that oral performers relied on formulae (for instance, noun + epithet) to compose rapidly in performance and that the meter of the verse would decide which formula a performer would use. Foley recognizes that several earlier scholars had made remarks about the formulaic nature of the Homeric poems or had found analogous manifestations of formulae in other (contemporary) oral poems; however, he seems unaware of the scholarship to which Parry was exposed while in Paris. Foley credits Parry with the foundational idea that formulae indicate oral origins. As it turns out, already in 1909, the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep had suggested that the Homeric Question would form an ideal test for anthropological research.⁶⁹ Murko's work, which appeared in French in 1929, is also full of comparisons to Homeric poetry. Oddly, when Parry refers to fieldwork before his own, he uses the work of Vasilii Radlov, who worked among the Turkish tribal peoples during the 1880s. There was plenty of more recent work around in Mauss' circle, and many of the areas researched—as outlined in the *Questionnaires*—covered oral poetry and the telling of tales.

Parry also argued that written poetry is fundamentally different, a point made earlier by Mauss in his *Questionnaire*: written poetry does not rely on short, easily identifiable, formulae. Which brings us to the second part of the Homeric question: how then, were these poems preserved in writing? Cohen's *Questionnaire* already suggested finding a good informant and have him write down what he hears, since this might be difficult for a non-native speaker. The presence of formulae in such dictated texts confirmed their oral origins since a literate poet would not rely so heavily on formulae. Literacy, the argument goes, allows for more time to compose and for originality. Thus, oral poetry is *traditional* and naturally situated in a traditional "mechanical" society,

68 See Foley 1988, XIII.

69 van Gennep 1909, 5–6.

whereas poetry composed in writing is *original* and *innovative*, an expression of the *individual* thought of its author, and arguably only becomes possible in Durkheim's "organic" society. The individuality of writing authors was highlighted by Lord in *The Singer of Tales*. "Literacy," Foley states, "spells death for the tradition."⁷⁰

Parry and Lord erected this barrier between what literate and illiterate poets are capable of, based on the single sample of Yugoslav Muslim performers. They extended this hypothesis to the Homeric poems. For both scholars, dictation was a logical step. But this step had consequences: it reinforced the very old Western belief that alphabetic writing is superior to any other writing system, and that it was the invention or adaptation of the alphabet by the Greeks that enabled the preservation of such early oral poetry. At the same time, the unique features of the alphabet would explain why no other examples existed for other archaic societies with different writing systems.

Conclusions

Our investigation of Marcel Mauss and its possible influence of the discipline of classics on anthropological scholarship has actually shown us the profound influence of the new discipline of anthropology and its requirement of fieldwork on the discipline of classics. The European and American scholars of the early twentieth century were all still trained in the classics: the Greeks and Romans were usually their first encounter with "the other" as we might say today. But they could not help but be fascinated by the reports that came back from ethnographic fieldwork. Many parallels were found, particularly since the old stadial model of the "evolution of societies" still current in classics could accommodate the comparison of archaic or primitive societies. However, finding parallels was not enough, and this is where French scholarship as practised by Durkheim, Mauss, and their many students and colleagues, was different and fresh. Under the influence of Durkheim and Mauss, the ethnological focus in France shifted to a new quest: what holds societies together? Durkheim defined the differences between "mechanical" and "organic" societies, and early archaic Greece firmly fell into the former. This distinction was exploited by Mauss in his essay *The Gift*, where features from ancient Roman and Greek civilizations (in addition

⁷⁰ Foley, 1988, 43.

to the data from contemporary societies) enabled him to come close to a universal truth about societal cohesion: the obligation to give, to accept, and to make counter-gifts.

The Durkheimian and Maussian view of societies provided Milman Parry with a method and a context for investigating oral performances in a “mechanical” society, and use the results to interpret the composition of the Homeric epics. Using Mauss’ *Manuel d’ethnographie*, it became possible to study the transmission of culture, especially in non-literate environments. Parry and, later, Lord took advantage of the new discipline to take the Homeric Question out of philology and recast it as an empirical enquiry. The resulting work became known as the Oral Theory, which revolutionized Homeric studies and, in the humanities, became widely applied to other literary texts of uncertain origins both ancient and medieval. In anthropology, empirical work continues, obeying Mauss’ mandate to get more data, more *faits totaux*. The last word (or formula?) has not yet been spoken.

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The *Magna Graecia* of Ernesto de Martino: Studying Ancient and Contemporary Evil Eye

Irene Salvo

This chapter highlights the interconnections and movable boundaries between the classics and early anthropology by exploring the work of Ernesto de Martino, an Italian ethno-anthropologist and historian of religion, whose intellectual acme was in the 1950s.¹ Although he greatly influenced several internationally famous Italian historians, such as Carlo Ginzburg, he is little known in the Anglophone scholarly community.² However, in more recent years, things have moved in a different direction: three of his most important books have been translated and more secondary literature about de Martino is being published in English.³ The present contribution will focus on his treatment of ancient Greek and Roman sources and his analysis of evil eye belief and practices in mid-twentieth-century southern Italy, a crucial aspect of his work and legacy.

1 De Martino was born in Naples on December 1, 1908, and died in Rome on the May 6, 1965. Author's note: I would like to thank the generosity and kindness of Annamaria Fantauzzi, who granted me access to her unpublished material. I feel personally particularly close to the work of de Martino. My degree thesis in classics explored the ideology of death in Pindar's poetry, and one of the most inspiring readings was *Morte e pianto rituale*. Furthermore, in the last twelve years, I have been working as expat in various European countries, and this has led me to better understand the feeling of *spaesamento*, of losing the geographical and cultural coordinates of one's own identity, a concept that de Martino highlighted in his analysis of rural societies (de Martino 1959 (2006); Pasquinelli 1986; Fantauzzi 2003, 29ff.). Today, although the migrations cannot be directly compared, this *spaesamento* makes us also think about the flux in which people in the Mediterranean and Europe find themselves, especially those who flee war-torn countries in search of a safe roof, risking even more than their cultural and personal identity.

2 See Ferrari 2012, VIII.

3 English translations: de Martino 1948 (1989); 1961 (2005); 1956 (2012); 1959 (2015b). This recent international recognition is exemplified by a recent volume of the *Journal of American Folklore* (vol. 128, no. 507, Winter 2015), a special issue dedicated to de Martino and the prolific application of his theories and methodologies in anthropological enquiries.

A disciple of the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce,⁴ de Martino was among the first scholars to question magic's reputation as a perverse form of religion.⁵ Before the rise of the structural-functional method in sociology and anthropology and the phenomenological method in comparative religions, he addressed the prejudice against magic. He believed in a dialectic relationship between magic and religion, criticizing interpretations of the sacred that neatly separated the two spheres and interrupted any communication and exchange between them.⁶

His interest in the religious and magical rituals performed by economically deprived strata of society was encouraged by a political passion for Marxism. He was a member of the Italian Communist Party from 1950 until 1957 when he left the party after the Hungarian uprising.⁷ In his view, ethnographic research had to promote solutions to the problems of subaltern classes in an underdeveloped southern Italy: writing history should ultimately support political action and the progress of humanity. From his picture of southern Italy, a tense dichotomy emerges between rural areas inhabited by lower classes imbued with ancient magical beliefs and urban intellectuals devoted to the Catholic customs and divine agents that acquired the social power of a state religion. However, as has been noted, equating folklore with the culture of subaltern classes is problematic in ethnography.⁸

One of de Martino's important and original contributions to anthropology is the elaboration of the concept of the "crisis of the presence." According to de Martino, there are historically determined situations in which an individual's presence in the world is fragile and not guaranteed, and the individual is continuously exposed to the threat of disappearing in the continuous unfolding of history. These situations correspond with various aspects of human life,

4 On the multifaceted relationship that de Martino had with the Crocian historicism, see *ex plurimis* Pasquinelli 1986; Imbruglia 1990; Di Donato 1999; Signorelli 2015.

5 See also Zinn 2015, 5, on his critical ethnocentrism, Gramscian historicism, progressive folklore, and new humanism. Ferrari (2012, VIII) defines him as an *ante litteram* postmodernist.

6 See, for example, de Martino 1959 (2006), 199n32. See also Ferrari 2012, 50–51; Signorelli 2015, 51–52.

7 On de Martino and Marxism, see, among others: de Martino 1977, 451–62; 1993; Rauty 1976; Di Donato 1990 (2016); Montanari 2001, 36–37; Ferrari 2012, 60–74; Massenzio 2012.

8 Ferrari 2012, 106. Cf. Signorelli 2015, 14–24, on de Martino's relationship with the world of the peasants, that should be understood mostly within his ethnological methodology rather than his political engagement.

such as death, magical attacks, failed crops and other natural catastrophes, illness, and migrations of hunters. In such moments of crisis, the human mind risks not being consciously in the world because it is paralysed by existential anguish.⁹ This condition is incompatible with cultural life, and—without a ritual redemption—is a psychopathological status, a regression to a state of nature in which no decision is taken. Religion and magic can offer the means to contain and heal this dangerous situation, reintegrating the person in his or her active position in society. In his own words,

Being without resolution signals content that remains unmediated and undefined by cultural values, and it fails to become determinable content, but returns as an untameable symptom, as tyrannical extraneity. But there is more: madness as spirit becoming nature is precisely the risk of not-being-there as presence, of not-being-there in a human history, that is of receding onto the level of nature, where presence does not have a place. Here we reach the supreme existential alternatives: either healthy presence that opens itself up to the works and days of human culture; or ill presence that loses both itself and the world and plunges into madness.¹⁰

During the ritual ceremony, the participant acts as if he or she is not living in historical flux anymore. To restore the individual's social interactions,

A ritual presence comes to be instituted, with a reiterative, impersonal, and dreamy character. Such a presence, in which everything tends to become stereotypical and traditional, is technically suited to both trigger descent (*catabasi*) toward psychic realities at risk of alienation, or to start the ascent (*anabasi*) toward values. Ritual (or mythico-ritual) presence is thus to be understood as a presence that works under a regime of “saving” (*risparmio*), that tends to restore the balance that has started to tip toward failure.¹¹

The interconnection between myth and ritual and the de-historification of misfortune removes the temptation of the crisis and allows a return to the level of culture.¹²

9 On life's challenges and paralysing anguish, see de Martino 1948, 227–39.

10 De Martino 1956 (2012), 439. Translation by Ferneti and Stewart.

11 De Martino 1956 (2012), 444. Translation by Ferneti and Stewart.

12 See de Martino 1958 (2000), 309. See also Zinn 2015, 10ff.

The cultural management of the “crisis of presence” is masterfully investigated in his celebrated trilogy on the folkloric traditions of southern Italy. The first book, *Morte e pianto rituale* (*Death and Ritual Lament*), was published in 1958 and explored the elaboration of grief in funerary practices and the dynamics of ritual lament from antiquity to the twentieth century. In 1959, he published *Sud e magia* (*South and Magic*) on magical practices, binding, and evil eye. *La terra del rimorso* (*The Land of Remorse*), on tarantism and the therapeutic power of music was published in 1961. When he died at fifty-seven, he was working on a massive tome on the meaning of apocalyptic movements; his manuscript was published posthumously as *La fine del mondo* (*The End of the World*). Given the complexity and abundance of this material, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a thorough analysis of de Martino’s theoretical framework and ethnographic results,¹³ while it is appropriate to the present volume to focus on how he handled the ancient evidence. Before examining more in detail ancient and modern evil eye beliefs, it is worth concisely outlining how ancient Greek and Roman sources entered in de Martino’s discussion of funerary rituals and tarantism.

Rites for the Dead, Rites for the Living: Anthropological Discourse and Ancient Documents

Although de Martino did not study Greek at school, a fundamental ingredient of the education of an Italian intellectual in *studia humanitatis* (especially in his time), his degree thesis at the University of Naples (1932) dealt with ancient Athens in particular.¹⁴ He studied the Eleusian *gephyrismoι*, insults exchanged on the bridge over the river Kephisos between the participants in the Mysteries in honour of Demeter and Kore. He analysed the mythical dimension of this rite, mapping the meaning of the myths of Iambe and Baubó as well as of the ritual obscenity. In a journal article derived from his thesis, he included parallels with ethnographic rites celebrating the regeneration of nature and vegetation.¹⁵ Two other early articles took a philological approach, one on Plato’s political vision of the relationship between an authoritative and bureaucratic state and the freedom of its individual citizens, and the other

13 On the work of de Martino, his theories, methodologies, and achievements, there is a plethora of studies. See, most recently, Signorelli 2015 and its bibliography.

14 See Fantauzzi 2004, 6.

15 De Martino 1934a. See Di Donato 1999, 41–56, for an analytical comparison between the unpublished degree thesis and the journal article.

on the nature of the sacred and its Latin etymologies.¹⁶ However, it is in the book *Death and Ritual Lament* that the boundaries between the disciplines of classics and anthropology are most obviously infringed.

Death and Ritual Lament illustrates well how the Italian ethnographer dealt with the classical world. Documents from ancient Mediterranean cultures (Greek, Roman, and Egyptian, in particular) play a great role in his tableau. But the relationship was reciprocal: the data collected during the fieldwork in Lucania (modern Basilicata, southern Italy) were considered extremely valuable for better understanding the ancient evidence and vice versa. Annamaria Fantauzzi has examined de Martino's original notes on lament and funerary rites in ancient civilizations.¹⁷ She illustrates how de Martino exploits direct and indirect sources on archaic and classical Greece in his reconstruction of the ritual management of death.¹⁸ As useful examples for understanding the phenomena studied in Lucania, the anthropologist uses Homeric poetry, especially the *Iliad*, and Attic tragedies, especially Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, *Persians*, and *Libation Bearers*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Electra*, and Euripides' *Alcestis*, *Medea*, *Suppliants*, and *Trojan Women*.¹⁹ The sources are quoted mainly in Italian translation, although some passages are copied in Greek (de Martino had since studied the language independently).²⁰ As highlighted by Fantauzzi, de Martino identifies the Greek terms for ritual lament and the texts in which they recur more often,²¹ and highlights specific nuances of different terms. The dirge (ἐπικήδειον) was sung by the tomb during the burial,²² while the θρήνος was a spontaneous lament by the relatives of the dead as well as a poetically elaborated form of mourning, as in the case of Pindar's compositions. Extemporaneous weeping from family members or wailing without constraint or time-limit was a γόος, whereas ἄλεμος was a "primitive" γόος mainly found in tragic lyric.²³

16 De Martino 1934b and 1937, respectively.

17 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino*, kept by his companion and colleague Vittoria De Palma. A digital copy of this archive is now available to registered users: <http://archivio.ernestodemartino.it/dialog.php>.

18 See Fantauzzi 2004, 80–87, for a detailed description of the field and research notes preliminary to *Morte e pianto rituale* and the relevant folders in de Martino's archive.

19 See Fantauzzi 2004, 116, for an analysis of de Martino's quotes from these works.

20 Fantauzzi 2004, 116.

21 Fantauzzi 2004, 187.

22 Cf. LSJ s.v. κήδος: "grief," "funerary rites," "mourning."

23 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino*, 10.04.067.

Beyond vocabulary, he considers the use of images vital, both ancient (such as the iconography of vases and reliefs) and contemporary (such as cinematic and photographic documentation collected in the field). Accordingly, the photographer Franco Pinna was among the members of the expedition in Lucania, and *Death and Ritual Lament* closes with the *Atlante figurato del pianto* (*Figurative Atlas of Mourning*). In this appendix, de Martino juxtaposes sixty-seven scenes of ritual lament from across the centuries.²⁴ He writes,

From our fundamentally historical-religious point of view, issues of style and history of art are not interesting, and, even less, an assessment of the representative efficacy of each individual figure; what is interesting is solely the ritual mimic that can be restored from the ancient figurative material; therefore, we will use the archaeological evidence specifically as document of customs, and precisely of lament as a rite.²⁵

From this excerpt, one might criticise de Martino for a rigid separation between stylistic and historical analysis: the two approaches can support each other and do not necessarily stand in opposition. However, in his time, methodological divisions were stronger, and the theories and methods of visual anthropology were not yet developed. Indeed, de Martino's merits include incorporating visual material in anthropological and ethnographic discourse and paving the way for others to do so.²⁶ De Martino considered facial expressions and gestures an invaluable proof of his theory on the crisis of presence and the alienating, but restorative, function of ritual lament. The collective dimension of the funerary rite kept the mourner from dying along with the dead. Individual emotions of grief and despair were contained by the social codes of funerary performance. However, Maria Serena Mirto has underlined the

24 As investigated by Faeta 2003, 79–110, de Martino's approach to images and his atlas reminds one of, and it might have been influenced by, Aby Warburg's photographic collection (now kept and expanded at the Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, University of London). See also Agosti and Sciuto 1990.

25 De Martino 1958 (2000), 376–77: "dal nostro punto di vista essenzialmente storico-religioso non interessano le questioni di stile e di storia dell'arte, e ancor meno la valutazione dell'efficacia rappresentativa delle singole figure, ma unicamente la mimica rituale che dal materiale figurativo del mondo antico è possibile ricostruire; noi cioè utilizzeremo il materiale archeologico unicamente come documento del costume, e precisamente della lamentazione come rito." This and the following translations from de Martino are the author's own.

26 On de Martino's contribution to the field of visual anthropology, see Faeta 2003, 59–77, 101–27, and Signorelli 2015, 104–8.

difficulties of his interpretation of the classical material solely in terms of psychological tensions and direct links with contemporary practices. For example, in the Iliadic scene in which Achilles hears the news of Patroclus' death,²⁷ de Martino differentiates the chaotic and immediate manifestations of grief very strongly from the more civilized ritual expressions in the funerary sequence.²⁸ He also assigned excessive importance to agrarian rituals and to the myth of the god that dies and returns. Especially problematic is his idea of relics of earlier beliefs and practices surviving among certain groups: the Graeco-Roman ideology of death was contrasted and supplanted by Christianity, he argued, but persisted as relics in disadvantaged and economically underdeveloped areas. As anthropological studies after Philippe Ariès have shown, ways of coping with death have changed over time together with the histories of societies and mentalities.²⁹ The problematic identification of a *continuum* from antiquity to the twentieth century, and the likewise problematic interpretation of magical and religious beliefs as constant psychological categories are also present in his treatment of tarantism and the evil eye.

If funerary rites for the deceased honour dead members of the group and support surviving relatives, tarantism involves rites directed towards living persons who risk symbolic deaths. The fieldwork for his book on tarantism, *La terra del rimorso*, was carried out between the 20th of June and 20th of July 1959.³⁰ In this work, de Martino sets within a symbolic framework the dance and music performed in Salento (Puglia, southern Italy) to cure people, mostly young women, bitten by a venomous tarantula: the victim falls into a melancholic and depressive state, alternating between agitation and frightened silence. The therapy consists of the *pizzica-tarantata*, music, songs, and dances tailored to each patient and continuously performed, day and night, until recovery. To ask the protection and the grace from Saint Paul was also part of the ceremony. De Martino demonstrates that the bite was not real but symbolic. In these healing rituals, as in the funeral chants, the rhythm was charged with cathartic power.

Interest in the Graeco-Roman world is also evident in *La terra del rimorso*, where de Martino completes the ethnographic analysis with a historical commentary on the phenomenon of tarantism. He traces its roots back to antiquity

27 *Il.* 18.18.

28 Mirto 1990 (2016), 149.

29 Mirto 1990 (2016), 150–57; Ariès 1974.

30 De Martino 1961. The book has been translated into English (de Martino 1961 (2005)). As many reviewers of this translation have noted, it is impossible to render the nuances of the Italian term *rimorso*, which may indicate both “remorse, regret” and “to bite again.”

and devotes four chapters to ancient Greek sources.³¹ He is particularly interested in the Mysteries and orgiastic cults as well as in the use of music and dance for therapeutic purposes. Several quotations from Greek literature enrich his analysis. For example, he quotes Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, where Io relates how she was driven mad by the sting of a gadfly (*oistros*). He also quotes sources on maenadism and its ecstatic manifestations. He cites Platonic and Aristotelian theories on the healing powers of music, the suicidal tendencies of girls in the *Aiora* festival, and the exorcisms operated by magicians and purifiers.³² Despite similarities between comparable ritual mechanisms, however, de Martino acknowledges that exact parallels from contemporary tarantism cannot be found in antiquity.³³ Therefore, while ancient documents enter his anthropological discourse, he maintained a degree of discrepancy between ancient and contemporary beliefs and practices. De Martino references ancient practices for comparison or elucidation, but not as direct equivalents to contemporary practices.

Evil Eye and Magic Spells: Ancient and Contemporary Fears

A clear divergence between classics and anthropology, by contrast, might seem evident in *Sud e magia* (*South and Magic*, 1959). The book is the result of de Martino's expeditions in Lucania between 1950 and 1957. It was published before *La terra del rimorso*³⁴ and is part of his so-called Southern Trilogy (along with *La terra del rimorso* and *Morte e pianto rituale*). The relationship between classics and anthropology in *Sud e magia* is interestingly more elusive than in the other two books. The difference is evident even from the table

31 The four chapters are: "Ethnological and Folkloric Parallels"; "The Symbolism of *Oistros*"; "The symbolism of *Aioresis*"; and "Musical Catharsis."

32 See Fantauzzi 2004, 46–54.

33 Momigliano 1962, 165; Fantauzzi 2004, 54.

34 A few years before expanding his study on Apulian tarantism, de Martino dedicated an appendix in *Sud e magia* to it (de Martino 1959 (2006), 186–90). Although the practice is still called "tarantolismo," his collaborator Amalia Signorelli later pointed out to de Martino that locals used the term "tarantismo" instead (Signorelli 2015, 107n51). Already in this appendix, he quotes Plato (*Leg.* 790–791a, and *Phdr.* 244–245a) on the manic state of fearful souls and the Coribantic healing technique that involves music and dance. He quoted from Plato's *Phaedrus* the expression "right madness" in Greek as "ὀρθή μαυία" neglecting the accents and spirits and misspelling υ for ν. But, most importantly, perhaps, this is not a faithful quotation from the Platonic text, which has "τῷ ὀρθῶς μανέντι" (Pl. *Phdr.* 245a, referring to the divinely inspired oracular powers).

of contents: no specific chapter or section is dedicated to the ancient world.³⁵ The book is divided in two parts. The first part reports ethnographic data, namely transcripts of the collected chants and interviews on various concerns of southern-Italian magic, such as illness, childhood, and breastfeeding. The second part explores the relationships between “low ceremonial magic” and “high culture,” the latter belonging to Catholics and intellectuals. The tracing of historical roots in the book seems to stretch only back to the sixteenth century, with particular attention paid to eighteenth-century Naples. Although in *Sud e magia* the relationship between classics and anthropology is more difficult to ascertain, de Martino nevertheless uses Greek and Roman antiquity to understand magical practices, for example, those concerning the evil eye in twentieth-century Italy.

The evil eye, present in cultures from all over the world, has been the subject of much anthropological research. While a cross-cultural and trans-historical belief, its patterns and social functions are culturally bound. The evil eye can cause harm to family health, animals, crops, and property. It is activated by envy and envious gazes since it is believed that the gaze can convey not only vision but also malignant influences.³⁶ Qualities like wealth, high social status, power, fame, success, talent, good health, and beauty can provoke envy, a resentful desire for something that one does not have but another person does. It is likely to be experienced when comparisons with others are felt to

35 This is the table of contents (translated into English, with the original Italian in brackets): Preface (Prefazione); Part I: Lucanian Magic (Magia lucana); 1. Evil Eye (La fascinazione); 2. Enchantment and Eros (Fascinazione ed Eros); 3. Magical Representation of Illness (La rappresentazione magica della malattia); 4. Childhood and Enchantment (Infanzia e fascinazione); 5. Bewitchment and Breast-milk (La fascinazione del latte materno); 6. The Storm (La tempesta); 7. Magical Life of Albano (Vita magica di Albano); Part II: Magic, Catholicism, and High Culture (Magia, cattolicesimo e alta cultura); 1. Crisis of Presence and Magical Protection (Crisi della presenza e protezione magica); 2. The Horizon of Crisis (L'orizzonte della crisi); 3. The De-historification of the Negative (La destorificazione del negativo); 4. Lucanian Magic and Magic (Magia lucana e magia); 5. Lucanian Magic and Southern-Italian Catholicism (Magia lucana e cattolicesimo meridionale); 6. Neapolitan Illuminism and Jettatura (Illuminismo napoletano e jettatura); 7. Romantic Sensitivity, Protestant Polemic, and Jettatura (Sensibilità romantica, polemica protestante e jettatura); 8. The Kingdom of Naples and Jettatura (Regno di Napoli e jettatura); Epilogue (Epilogo); Appendix: On Apulian Tarantism (Intorno al tarantolismo pugliese); Notes (Note). See de Martino 1959 (2015a) for the latest edition of this book.

36 Cf. Heliod. *Aeth.* 3.7 on the malignant influence that travels through the air. See more in Dunbabin and Dickie 1983 on how evil eye was conceptualized in antiquity.

be unfavourable, especially in spheres of self-definition. Since envy is a negative emotion, it is usually denied or concealed in public.³⁷ The cognitive and symbolic system of evil eye comprises not only factors related to magic and religion but also to psychological behaviour, social inequalities, and economy. Anthropologists have noted that, although envy and eye contact may be universal, the belief in the evil eye is more common in societies with an economy based on milk-animals and grain crops as well as personal patronage, and it is particularly prominent in Mediterranean cultures.³⁸ The evil eye is attested in the ancient Graeco-Roman world from the archaic period to late antiquity in literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources from various regions of the Mediterranean, from Sicily to Syria. The most important ancient Greek terms are φθόνος ("begrudging envy," "ill-will, jealousy of the good fortune of others") and βασκανία ("malign influence," "bewitchment"), equivalents of the Latin *invidia* and *fascinum* respectively.³⁹

Although, on the surface, classical sources seem almost ignored in de Martino's book on southern magic, there is a folder in his archives dedicated to material on the evil eye in the classical world.⁴⁰ It is an interesting analytical exercise to compare his notebooks with his published work, even briefly. He was particularly interested in the terms βασκανία and *fascinum*, and his starting point for understanding the history of evil eye in antiquity was the entry in *fascinum* in the *Real-Enzyklopädie*.⁴¹ This reference is cited in his notebook and in the book.⁴² The same correspondence occurs regarding a quotation of Plutarch, the longest discussion of the phenomenon in ancient literature.⁴³ In his notebook, de Martino also took note of the theory of the philosopher Democritus:

The envious send out images which are not altogether void of sense or force, but full of the disturbing and poisonous qualities of those from

37 See Clanton 2006.

38 Garrison and Arensberg 1976, 290.

39 See LSJ s.v. φθόνος and βασκανία. On the Greek vocabulary and semantics of envy, see Sanders 2014, 33–57.

40 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino* 15.6, titled on the first page "Mondo classico." Among other texts, he took note of the following ancient sources: Pl. *Euthyd.* 283e; Cic. *Att.* 8.3.1; Plin. *HN* 28.35. About the chronology of this folder, Fantauzzi (2003, 363) rightly notes that, although it is difficult to date, the material was probably collected during or slightly before the writing up of part two of *Sud e magia*.

41 Kuhnert 1909.

42 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino* 15.6.1; de Martino 1959 (2006), 110n17.

43 Plut. *Quaes. conv.* 5.7.1–6 = 680c–683b; see on this passage Elliott 2016, 11, 48–56.

whom they come. Now these being mixed with such qualities, and remaining with and abiding in those persons that are overlooked, disturb, and injure them both in mind and body.⁴⁴

In the book, he refers to the passage at the beginning of a chapter dedicated to the history of the *jettatura*, the Neapolitan term for the cursing look that brings bad luck.⁴⁵ De Martino uses Democritus here to launch his argument that evil eye is not provoked by magic but by physical mechanisms. This materialistic explanation existed throughout the Middle Ages alongside magico-demoniac and psychological interpretations.⁴⁶ On another page of his notebook, de Martino also noted that amulets had strange, ludicrous, and mirth-provoking shapes, as Plutarch specifies: “the so-called amulets are thought to be a protection against malice. The strange look of them attracts the gaze, so that it exerts less pressure upon its victim.”⁴⁷

Previous scholarship has noted that de Martino’s comparison between ancient and modern evil eye is less satisfying than the comparisons he made in his research on tarantism and funerary lament: there was no extensive analysis of the ancient evidence, and Greek documents were almost ignored.⁴⁸ The scanty treatment of ancient Greek and Roman magic has been attributed to the ancient Greeks, in particular, not conceiving of the individual as separate from society and the divine. Therefore, it is argued, their relationship with supernatural agents is not comparable with that in contemporary Italy.⁴⁹ Ancient Greeks imagined evil eye only as φθόνος θεῶν, the jealousy felt by the gods in regards to human activities, and never as a malignant gaze between mortal

44 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino* 15.6.1; Plut. *Quaes. conv.* 682f–683a = DK 68 A 77: ἃ φησιν ἐκείνος ἐξίέναι τοὺς φθοноῦντας, οὐτ’ αἰσθήσεως ἄμοιρα παντάπασιν οὐθ’ ὁρμῆς ἀνάπλεά τε τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν προίεμένων μοχθηρίας καὶ βασκανίας, μεθ’ ἧς ἐμπλασσόμενα καὶ παραμένοντα καὶ συνοικοῦντα τοῖς βασκαينوμένοις ἐπιταράττειν καὶ κακοῦν αὐτῶν τό τε σῶμα καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν. Translation from Goodwin 1874.

45 De Martino 1959 (2006), 130.

46 De Martino 1959 (2006), 130.

47 Plut. *Quaes. conv.* 681f–682a: διὸ καὶ τὸ τῶν λεγομένων προβασκανίων γένος οἶονται πρὸς τὸν φθόνον ὠφελεῖν, ἐλκομένης διὰ τὴν ἀτοπίαν τῆς ὀψεως, ὥσθ’ ἦττον ἐπερείδειν τοῖς πάσχουσιν. Translation from Clement 1969.

48 See Di Donato 1999, 99: “Il dossier relativo alla fascinazione lucana veniva svolto in termini di indagine storico-religiosa ma senza il reale attingimento, nell’ambito locale studiato, della dimensione del passato remoto, costituito dalle civiltà antiche, da quella greca in particolare.” See also Fantauzzi 2003a, 354–77.

49 Fantauzzi 2003a, 376.

men.⁵⁰ Moreover, it is argued, conscious of how vast the topic of ancient magic was, de Martino avoided comparison all together.⁵¹ This interpretation of de Martino's approach to ancient magic, however, has two weaknesses. First, a more recent study has shown that φθόνος θεῶν is not the "envy of the gods" but is better interpreted as "a divine refusal to grant human aspirations."⁵² Second, there is abundant evidence of the casting of the malevolent evil eye among mortals in antiquity. The way in which antiquity emerges in *Sud e magia* is certainly different than in *Morte e pianto rituale* and *La terra del rimorso*; however, the reasons for this difference are not lack of interest in comparison or incomparability with ancient practices. The explanation lies elsewhere.

Writing in the 1950s, prior to the flourishing of studies on ancient magic in the last three decades, de Martino did not have an extensive bibliography at his disposal. Several major achievements in the understanding of Greek and Roman magical practices have since been gained from the discovery of new epigraphic and archaeological sources. This is probably one of the reasons for the lack of comparison: the parallel evidence was not yet available to de Martino. An updated comparison between ancient and modern evil eye elucidates this well. An inscription from Amorgos, dated to the sixth century BCE reads: "Sateles used to be good-looking, until someone gave him the evil eye."⁵³ In an epigram from the *Greek Anthology*, we find a recurrent belief that even envious persons who cast the evil eye will be damaged: "Envy is terrible, but there is something good in it: it consumes also the eyes and heart of envious people."⁵⁴ This seemingly famous line is inscribed on walls and mosaics in places as far away as Lyon, Phrygia, and Beirut.⁵⁵ Ancient evil eye beliefs comparable to those in contemporary southern Italy are also suggested by the abundance of apotropaic inscriptions, amulets, and visual depictions from the imperial and late antique periods, in particular. A popular image represents a left human eye being attacked by beasts, such as dogs, birds, and scorpions, as in the mosaic from the House of the evil eye in Antioch (Syria) dated to the second century CE. The mosaic demonstrates the fear of the house-owner of

50 Fantauzzi 2003a, 371, building on reflections of Dodds (1997, 37) on divine jealousy.

51 Fantauzzi 2003a, 375.

52 Roig Lanzillotta 2010. On divine *phthonos*, see also Eidinow (2016), who links the expression to gift-giving dynamics and unbalanced reciprocity between mortals and gods.

53 IG XII 7, 106 = Peek GV 2041: Σατέλης ποτὲ καλός· ἐβά<σ>κηνέ<ν> >νιν ὁ μάν[τις]. Translation by Renehan 1976, 40–43. Inscription on a rock.

54 *Anth. Pal.* XI 193: 'Ο φθόνος ἐστὶ κάκιστος, ἔχει δέ τι καλὸν ἐν αὐτῷ· τήκει γὰρ φθονερῶν ὄμματα καὶ κραδίην.

55 See Robert 1978, 326ff.; Olszewski 2001, 286.

being attacked by malevolent forces. The inscription reads *KAI CY* ("the same to you"), a counter-spell directed against envious enemies, confirming that the evil eye can also be dangerous for those who perform it.⁵⁶ Similar images were common at the entrance of houses or on the wall of buildings.⁵⁷ The same motif is represented in a gold amulet worn to avert illness and misfortune.⁵⁸ In the recto of an undated lead medal from a private collection in Sicily, there is a figure with a large phallus as well as an open eye on the lower left, with the inscription *ὀφθαλμόν* ("eye"), likely the accusative object of a verb like "kill."⁵⁹ On the verso of another bronze medal from Sicily, dated to the fifth or sixth century CE, around an eye there are two lions, an ibis, a scorpion, a snake, and a lizard. The accompanying inscription invokes divine protection: "God help me."⁶⁰

The evidence collected by de Martino in southern Italy is comparable. The eye is the medium of the attack, as in antiquity, and the Christian Holy Trinity can be invoked to protect against it: "Who did cast upon you the evil eye? The eye, the mind, and the ill-will. Who will set you free? The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."⁶¹ This incantation has to be recited three times and followed each time by one profession of faith, one Hail Mary, and one Our Father. Three negative forces are contrasted by three forces believed to possess stronger powers. Sometimes, the spell opposes two negative forces with a greater number of positive ones, as in this case: "Two eyes saw you, three want to help you, Saint Anne, Saint Lene, Saint Mary Magdalen."⁶² De Martino notes that, in these spells, words and gestures are efficacious since they repeat a meta-historical model of the removal of evil.⁶³ Recognising the magical efficacy of words and ritual gestures, de Martino seems to have understood the importance of performative utterances, an idea found in the later scholarship of Austin and Tambiah. Tambiah applies Austin's linguistic theory to suggest that

56 On this formula, and its Latin equivalent *tibi*, see Slane and Dickie 1993, 490–92.

57 See, for example, the marble relief in the Woburn Abbey, UK (ca. 200 CE).

58 Roman, ca. second century CE, Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum.

59 Giannobile 2002n19, tab. 16b, private collection, undated; cf. a parallel in Weber 1914n131, tab. 12.

60 Giannobile 2002n6, tab. 14b, Catania, Italy, V/VI CE: *χόριε* (= *κύριε*) *βοήθι*.

61 De Martino 1959 (2006), 18, formula from Viggiano (Potenza, Basilicata): "Chi t'ave affascinà?/ L'uocchie, la mente e la mala volontà/ chi t'adda sfascinà?/ Lu Padre, lu Figliuolo e lu Spirito Santo."

62 De Martino 1959 (2006), 19, formula from Savoia di Lucania (Potenza, Basilicata): "Duie uocchie t'hanno affise/ tre te vonno aità/ Sant'Anna, Santa Lena/ Santa Maria Maddalena." In the Italian dialect, there is a rhyme, a singsong, that is lost in English.

63 De Martino 1959 (2006), 19.

communicative acts “create effects on human actors according to accepted social conventions.”⁶⁴ Similarly, de Martino sees the efficacy of the ritual in the repetition of the means of liberation from evil according to the procedures acknowledged by the wider community. Furthermore, in underlining the power of ceremonial words and gestures,⁶⁵ de Martino seems to anticipate Austin’s theory that saying is doing when the utterance is made by “certain persons” under “appropriate circumstances” and following “an accepted conventional procedure.”⁶⁶

Building on de Martino’s material, we can widen the comparative lens and include similar chants recited in contemporary Greece, for example: “Three saw you. Three bewitched you. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. From your mother you were born. By the Virgin and Christ you were baptized.”⁶⁷ The prayer is recited during the performance of a ritual in which the healer uses cloves, needles, and a candle to liberate the afflicted person from the evil eye. In modern Greek, two terms indicate the evil eye: *matiazma*, when someone casts the Eye preter-intentionally or unknowingly, and *vascania*, when the caster intentionally wants to control the force of malicious envy. In the case of *matiazma*, the victim may be cured by reciting one Our Father over and over or can be cured by someone else, whereas in the case of *vascania*, the intervention of a priest may be necessary.⁶⁸ The distinction between *matiazma* and *vascania* may be compared respectively to the Italian *malocchio*⁶⁹ and *fattura*. Similarly, in southern Italy, while *malocchio* can be unintended, an illness provoked by a *fattura* is intentionally cast against a victim. The illness may even be lethal and can only be recognised and cured by a professional magician, who diagnoses whether a magical or medical therapy is necessary.⁷⁰

The significance of these similarities between ancient and modern evil eye requires a deeper analysis than what is possible here, since they trigger crucial questions about cultural transmission, Mediterranean identity, what is

64 Tambiah 1990, 82.

65 De Martino 1959 (2006), 96: “potenza del gesto e della parola cerimoniali.”

66 Austin 1975, 12–15.

67 English translation from Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976, 46; from Hora, a village on Nisi, a small Aegean island, collected during her fieldwork in 1970–72. Unfortunately, she does not quote the original Greek.

68 Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976, 51.

69 Known also as *pigliata d’occhio*, see de Martino 1959 (2006), 68, reporting a fieldwork interview from Albano (17–28/5/1957).

70 De Martino 1959 (2006), 15.

universal and cultural specific in the beliefs and rituals around the evil eye, and the relationship between ancient religions and Christianity. However, such resemblances do help answer our particular question about de Martino's treatment of Greek and Roman evil eye. The limited space that he devoted to antiquity in his book *Sud e magia* can be explained by the scarcity of the documents available to him in the 1950s and their not being systematically catalogued and indexed at the time, rather than by a lack of comparability between ancient and contemporary evil eye beliefs and practices. De Martino was able to highlight some essential elements. For example, he knew that amulets made of precious metals and stones were charged with apotropaic power.⁷¹ However, ancient references often lack follow up information for analysis: For example, he notes the use of the exclamation ἀβασκάντως,⁷² but he did not also note that in antiquity it was also used as a personal name, Ἀβάσκαντος, which was believed to protect the baby.⁷³

De Martino's main interests lay in the historical interplay between Graeco-Roman beliefs and the new religious system of Christianity. The Church fathers did not deny the existence of evil eye but rather absorbed it within a Christian framework, considering its effects the work of Satan and demons.⁷⁴ Therefore, the Holy Trinity, the Saints, the priest, and the baptism became the best defence against it. Following the historical development of magical beliefs through the Renaissance and Enlightenment, de Martino highlighted the contrast between magic and rationality.⁷⁵ This dichotomy no longer has strong interpretative

71 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino* 15.6.1, 15.6.7 (περίαμμα).

72 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino* 15.6.2, original Greek.

73 See *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, s.v. Ἀβάσκαντος

74 *Archivio Ernesto de Martino* 15.6.3: de Martino consulted Lafaye 1896. He noted the following passages: Jer. *Ep. ad Sab.* 3.1; Tert. *De Vel. Virg.* 15, *De Carne Christ.* 2. On the survival of ancient magical beliefs after the rise of Christianity and on the effects of malicious envy as provoked by demons, see also Walcot 1978, 86; Luck 2003, 466.

75 See, for example, de Martino 1959 (2006), 184: de Martino recalls the Homeric episode in which Achilles decides to abandon the inaction of grief and return to fight in battle after looking at the scenes figured in the shield that his mother Thetis gave to him (*Il.* 19.1–73). Similarly, de Martino hopes that southern people will abandon magic in favour of rationality: “the kingdom of darkness and shadows will be driven back to his borders—the stream Ocean in the Homeric episode—and will also pale the artificial light of magic, with which uncertain men in an insecure society surrogate, for practical reason of existence, the authentic light of reason [sarà ricacciato nei suoi confini il regno delle tenebre e delle ombre—la corrente Oceano dell'episodio omerico,—e impallidirà anche il fittizio lume della magia, col quale uomini incerti in una società insicura surrogano, per ragioni pratiche di esistenza, l'autentica luce della ragione”].

force; current scholarship suggests that the opposition between the rational and the non-rational/superstitious in explaining the motivations behind the use of magic is less clearly defined. Magic can have broader social effects than merely consisting of inefficacious rituals and non-scientific attempts to modify nature. Malicious envy can represent a tool for inflicting harm on an enemy or neighbour. Thus, fear of the evil eye can play a role in maintaining social and economic equity among peers in small communities.⁷⁶ Furthermore, this belief transcends the boundaries between the intellectual categories of body, soul, and spirit.⁷⁷

Past and Present Crises of Presence

De Martino's career and work reveal how blurred the boundaries between classics and anthropology were in the intellectual milieu of mid-twentieth-century Italy.⁷⁸ De Martino started his scholarly career with a thesis on ancient Athenian religion while subsequently exploring magico-religious phenomena in contemporary southern Italy. He was particularly interested in tracing the historical development of a phenomenon. Pursuing this aim, he was an avid reader of Greek and Latin textual and iconographic sources. Although he highlighted similarities and recurrences across time, he was well aware of the differences. In his thinking, the repetition of comparable rituals could give the external observer a false impression of universality and ahistorical uniformity. De Martino believed this danger to be intrinsic to the study of magic and ritual because they serve to cope with the universal precarity of human life. In de Martino's words:

The reason for this perceived ahistoricity is because magic power, enchantment and demonic possession, evil eye and exorcism, are rooted in a risk that is peculiar to the cultural life, and that concerns the possibility itself of being as a presence in human history. In this sense, the repetitions and uniformities of magical traits derive from the constancy

⁷⁶ For a socio-economic analysis of evil eye beliefs, see recently Gershman 2015.

⁷⁷ See Roussou 2011.

⁷⁸ I decided to focus more on the use of ancient and contemporary textual sources without dedicating ink to the analysis of the influence on de Martino of ancient historians and archaeologists, since this topic has been already meticulously studied. On the relationship with Vittorio Macchioro and Raffaele Pettazzoni, in particular, see Charuty 2009; Di Donato 1990 (2016); 1999; Di Donato and Gandini 2015 (with further bibliography); Rebaudo 1990 (2016).

of the existential risk of *being-acted-by*, risk that the moral force of culture overcomes and solves with the *acting* towards value.⁷⁹

Ahistoricity can also result from the methodology used by the observer, as de Martino continues:

The apparent ahistoricity of magic might also come from a methodological mistake, that is when we isolate the protective magical techniques from the actual cultural context in which they have a protective function, and we compare them with other similar techniques of other cultural contexts, to constitute in the end a kind of 'magical world' that in such fictitious isolation never existed as a *cultural fact*. The historical meaning of the protective techniques of magic is in the values that those techniques reaffirm in critical moments of a certain regime of existence and, therefore, it is evident only if we consider those techniques as a *moment* of a cultural dynamic that can be identified within a *single* civilization, a *particular* society, a *specific* period.⁸⁰

An analysis that highlights a linear continuity from antiquity until today would, of course, fail to recognise significant historical transformations and changes.

A degree of correspondence between magico-religious phenomena does, however, exist across the centuries, especially when one maintains the same geographic focus, for example, the Mediterranean Basin. Looking, in particular, at the monograph *Sud e magia*, one notices immediately from the table

79 De Martino 1959 (2006), 111 (original emphasis): "la ragione di questa apparente astoricità è da ricercarsi innanzitutto nel fatto che la forza magica, fascino e possessione, fattura ed esorcismo affondano le loro radici in un rischio che sottende la vita culturale, e che concerne la stessa possibilità di esserci come presenza in una storia umana. In questo senso le ripetizioni e le uniformità dei tratti magici sono da ricondurre alla costanza del rischio esistenziale di *essere-agito-da*, rischio che la forza morale della cultura domina e risolve con l'*agire* aperto al valore."

80 De Martino 1959 (2006), 111–12 (original emphasis): "Ma la apparente astoricità della magia può dipendere anche da un errore metodologico, e cioè quando isoliamo le tecniche protettive magiche dal concreto contesto culturale in cui esse svolgono una funzione di protezione, e le andiamo paragonando con altre tecniche similari che stanno in altri contesti culturali, per foggare infine un tipo di "mondo magico" che in tale fittizio isolamento non è mai esistito come *fatto culturale*. Il senso storico delle tecniche protettive della magia sta nei valori che tali tecniche ridischiodano innestandosi nei momenti critici di un determinato regime di esistenza, e si manifesta quindi soltanto se consideriamo quelle tecniche come *momento* di una dinamica culturale percepibile per entro una civiltà *singola*, una società *particolare*, un'epoca *definita*."

of contents how similar magical practices were also performed in the Graeco-Roman period, for example, erotic magic or magical approaches to illnesses and cures. One might even say that each chapter of the first part of *Sud e magia* explores a custom that has an analogue in antiquity. In his published work and unpublished notes, one gets the impression that de Martino included under the umbrella category of *fascinazione* (bewitchment) a variety of magical practices that were also practised in antiquity. If a greater number of sources and studies had been available to him, he would probably have been interested in exploring ancient Greek and Roman *defixiones*, apotropaic and healing amulets, demonic possession, the cult of Hecate, and the haunting spirits of restless dead. For example, he recognises the significance of a silver *lamella* from modern Austria dated to the first or second century CE, which was inscribed with a prayer against migraine and was used as healing amulet.⁸¹ The *historiola*, a story that re-enacts mythical circumstances and is loaded with curative force, tells of a sea and wind demon, Antaura, who provokes migraine. As she is about to enter the head of her victim, she is stopped by Artemis of Ephesus. This healing prayer was adapted in early-Christian and medieval texts and has parallels in the material collected by de Martino in contemporary southern Italy.⁸² In these prayers, the *historiola* activates ritual power, and the

81 Kotansky 1994, no. 13, from a necropolis of Carnuntum (Altenburg-Petronell): Πρὸς ἡμίκρανον Ἀνταύρα ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης, ἀνεβόησεν ὡς ἔλαφος, ἀνέκραξεν ὡς βοῦς· ὑπαντᾷ αὐτῇ Ἀρτεμις Ἐφεσ[ία]. Ἀνταύρα, πο[ῦ] ὑπάγεις;—ἰς τὸ ἡμίκρα[νον]—[μ]ὴ οὐ[κ] ἰς τὰ ν[...]. For the “Half-Head” [Migraine]: Antaura came out of the sea. She shouted like a hind. She cried out like a cow. Artemis of Ephesus met her (saying): “Antaura, where are you going?” (*Antaura*): “Into the half-part of the head.” (*Artemis*): “No, do not [go] into the [half-part of the head].” Greek text and English translation from Kotansky 1994, 60. Cf. de Martino’s translation in de Martino 1959 (2006), 106: “Vale per l’emicrania. Antaura si sollevò dal mare, lamentandosi come un cervo, mugghendo come un bue. Le andò incontro Artemide Efesia: ‘Antaura, dove vai?’” He compares this text with the *phylacterion* of *P. Paris* 2316, where Christ is the divine helper. His points of reference were Pradel 1907, Barb 1926, and Reitzenstein 1926.

82 See Kotansky 1994, 62–64 for parallel Christian medical exorcisms against demons that arouse from the sea, dated to the Middle Ages. In the twentieth century, cf. an exorcism against migraine from Valsinni, Basilicata: “A la funtana di Gisatte/ ddò fu battiate ‘o figlie di Ddie/ Vergine ‘a Madre e vergine ‘o Figlie/ Fa passare ‘o male de ciglie.” “At the fountain of Josaphat, where the son of God was baptized, virgin the Mother and virgin the Son, heal the headache” (de Martino 1959 (2006), 20). Also cf., from Savoia di Lucania, Basilicata, an illness provoked by a windy demonic force: “Male viene maledette/ e vattine a mare a necà/ ca sta carne benedetta/ non hai cosa le fa.” “Cursed bad wind, go and drown into the sea, because you don’t have anything to do to this is baptised flesh” (de Martino 1959 (2006), 30).

“myth-ritual nexus” dehistoricizes the negative event, bringing it to a meta-historical level that offers canonical ways of resolution to the crisis.⁸³

The comparison between ancient and contemporary data is carried out by de Martino with the intent of finding historical antecedents,⁸⁴ like relics that survive at the folkloric level notwithstanding Christianity.⁸⁵ In this way, he creates a dual past/present vision of the same symbolic phenomenon, integrating classical sources and ethnographic data into a coherent picture.⁸⁶ Although this methodology is less evident in the monograph *Sud e magia*, as compared to *Morte e pianto rituale* and *La terra del rimorso*, de Martino nevertheless included classical material when he approached magic and evil eye ethnographically. If there are differences between the three monographs, this is largely due to the more limited ancient evidence he had at his disposal: while he was using mostly literary sources, the majority of extant sources on magic and evil eye come from papyri, inscriptions, and archaeological objects that were not sufficiently published or widely accessible in Italy in the 1950s. In some cases, they were not yet even discovered. What de Martino teaches us is that, without assuming a linear continuity from antiquity to the present day, a comparison between ancient and modern sources can allow us to understand key elements of magico-religious phenomena.⁸⁷ His interpretation of apotropaic charms and gestures, such as the symbol of phallus and of the red horn, as cultural techniques for re-establishing a conscious presence after a crisis or a critical danger, shows his interest in the psychoanalysis of magic. In this, he anticipated recent advancements in the cognitive sciences of religion. De Martino’s work and scholarly career reaffirm the fascinating attractiveness and fruitful outcomes of the bond between classics and anthropology.

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83 De Martino 1959 (2006), 19–20. See also Zinn 2015, 10ff.

84 Fantauzzi 2004, 49.

85 Cf. Mirto 1990 (2016), 153.

86 Fantauzzi 2004, 51–52.

87 See also Ferrari 2012, 108.

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Anthropology and the Creation of the Classical Other

Franco De Angelis

In his most recent book, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, Erich Gruen identifies the publication of Edward Said's classic book *Orientalism* as the crucial watershed responsible for "the potent impact on scholarship," as he puts it, that Other-thinking has had over the last generation.¹ But Gruen did not go one step further to provide a background or explanation to help us understand why the Other should have been privileged in modern scholarly thinking in the first place long before Said tackled the matter.

This chapter picks up this point and strives to understand how such a potent impact on scholarship developed. I argue that anthropology influenced how classicists understood ancient culture contact long before it returned to do so in the last two decades.² Recognizing earlier links between anthropology and classics allows us to understand how and why classical scholars in the century spanning 1850 to 1950 developed the core concepts and questions that they did in their studies of ancient culture contact, in particular, how the Other came to have its potent impact on modern scholarship. Accordingly, this chapter will focus on two issues. The first concerns the introspection the formation of anthropology caused for the colonizer—not just to the colonized, as the matter is usually viewed. Second, it will relate this introspection to the development of classical scholarship, where it can be shown that anthropology and classics developed much more in tandem than currently imagined by anthropologists and classicists alike. It is important to examine how classics and anthropology played multiple and interrelated roles in the formation of their respective disciplines and questions. My overall aim is to take some of the common ways in which we think of classics and colonialism and turn them around. It will become evident that Europe was not the monumental block of "western civilization" that it is usually perceived to be and that the Europeanness of classics and anthropology owes much to the contemporary encounter of the Other

¹ Said 1978; Gruen 2011, 2.

² Dietler 2010.

first abroad and then at home, on closer introspection and later retrospection. We usually rely on the very assumptions that I challenge in this chapter.

The introspection and retrospection that the formation of anthropology caused for the colonizer have been blurred by the one-sided perspective encouraged by modern European colonialism. This has led to the convenient overlooking of the first impact of New World frontiers on their Old World metropolitan centres in a way that has only recently been explicitly recognized.³ The traditional view depicts the relationship between classics and anthropology as one of classicists contributing to the formation of anthropology in the late nineteenth century. However, the two fields interacted much more than this, with anthropology impacting scholarly accounts of Old World cultural development. This impact is either considered non-existent or minimal, restricted at most to Old World prehistory and serving as a nostalgic reminder of how much separated the superior Europeans and their descendants in the New World from the less technologically advanced societies that they were encountering around the world and that had existed in the past.⁴ I argue that the impact was more potent.

The origins of introspection and retrospection go back to the sixteenth century with the Society of Jesus. The so-called Jesuits had a dual mission: counter the Protestants and make converts to the Catholic Church's version of Christianity. They founded missions, schools, colleges, and seminaries in Europe and abroad to achieve this mission. But the order in which the establishment of this mission came about is crucial to note: it occurred only *after* the Jesuits had first spread their apostolic activity in the Americas and Asia.⁵ The high level of success that the Jesuits were having in their school at Goa, founded in 1543, resulted in the General Curia in Rome receiving many letters of request begging for the privilege to go to the missions "in the Indies."⁶ However, only recently has its "ingenious response" come to light: "Let Calabria or White Russia be your Indies!" This response may seem strange to us today, but it has to be remembered that, although Europe had in theory converted to Christianity, many isolated parts of the continent did not have deep or strong roots of conversion.⁷ By 1546, Jesuit schools started opening in Europe. The experiences of the Jesuits abroad opened the door to a similar process of

3 Melzer 2012, 14.

4 Burke 1995; Trigger 2006, 166–210; Detienne 2007; 2008; Bettini 2010, 250–53; Skinner 2012, 39–40.

5 Hogden 1964; Pagden 1982; cf. Erickson and Murphy 2003, 21, 38.

6 Lewis 1999.

7 Lewis 1999, 13–14; D'Agostino 2002, 319.

conversion in Europe. As noted by a Jesuit specialist: "The methodology for Jesuit ministry evolved through a continual interchange between the various geographic locations of that ministry—that ideas and methods crossed seas and nations, from Jesuits in the so-called "Indies of the Emperor" or "Indies of France" to the Jesuits who laboured in what was becoming known at the end of the century as "las otras Indias" or "Las indias por aca," namely the rural missions of Europe."⁸ One did not have to go far to find the Other: it existed at home too.⁹ This thinking had important recursive effects for the development of anthropology both at home in Europe and abroad, creating a two-way dialogue that needs to be better appreciated.

This two-way dialogue helps explain two other significant developments otherwise forgotten and left without a historical and cultural context. The first is that the colonizers of the New World colonized their home countries in the Old World by regarding their lower classes as the equivalent of Amerindians, Africans, Savages, and Barbarians, who needed to be raised to a national standard established by central governments.¹⁰ This was part of the nineteenth-century recognition that modern nations had "inner frontiers."¹¹ European and non-European nations and empires sought to modernize themselves completely, and that meant much more than just the creation of paved roads, railways, and public education. All these developments were part and parcel of another contemporary development: modernization theory.¹² Governments and scholars advanced explanations for the coming of modernity, now the measure of civilization and end goal. In particular, remnants of traditional ways of life both within and without these societies were regarded as the Other and became an object of attention that had to be eliminated for modernity's sake.¹³ Resistance to modernization and to being labelled primitive also occurred of course,¹⁴ but the tone of the times was highly pervasive and drowned out opposing voices. The study of the North-South divide characteristic of modern anthropological studies may have originated in North-South thinking applied first to within European countries: "the First and Third Worlds are not necessarily separable

8 Lewis 1999, 3.

9 Verdicchio 1997, 24; Díaz-Andreu 2007, 347–48.

10 Weber 1976; Shavit 1994, 322; Schneider 1998; Melzer 2012, 19–20; Skinner 2012, 185.

11 Bayly 2004, 435; Osterhammel 2014, 324.

12 For a recent discussion, see Hunt 2014, 8–10, 14–16, 26–28, 129. Cf. also Diamond 2012.

13 Bayly 2004, 432–50; Osterhammel 2014, 826–72.

14 E.g., Emanuele Ciaceri resisted the comparison with Redskins in discussing ancient Greek Italy (Ceserani 2012, 257). Cf. also Díaz-Andreu 2007, 406–7.

in geographic space.”¹⁵ The cases of France and Italy illustrate well the quest for modernization at home.

The opening chapter and paragraph of the late Eugen Weber’s classic book *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* begins:

“You don’t need to go to America to see savages,” mused a Parisian as he strolled through the Burgundian countryside of the 1840s. “Here are the Redskins of Fenimore Cooper.” Thus Balzac, in his *Paysans* (1844). Indeed, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that vast parts of nineteenth-century France were inhabited by savages.¹⁶

Eliminating these savages at home became an anthropological project of the French national government, with the undeveloped parts of the country integrated into the modern, official culture of the capital Paris through a process of assimilation.¹⁷ National betterment was the primary aim, and a unitary national culture and ideology had to be promoted over undeveloped parts of France. Various means were employed, including the improvement of infrastructure like roads and trains, the application of science and technology to agriculture, time-keeping, and wherever else possible, the imposition of national educational standards, and the establishment of law, order, politics, and military service. In doing so, the overall aim was to write the older traditional ways out of everyday life, by putting distance between them and the modern culture of the capital. This distance was also achieved symbolically by creating folklore collections and establishing the formal study of the French peasantry.

Italy is perhaps a better-known case of the application of such thinking. Even before the creation of the Italian nation-state in 1861, a strong divide within the peninsula between the Piedmontese north and Bourbon south had already existed.¹⁸ Starting in the 1820s, the geography of Italy came to be reimagined by elites of the centre-north, who recast the northern half of the peninsula as the true and primary Italy, and the southern Italian half as barbarism pure and simple, more akin to Africa and Asia than to the rest of Italy.¹⁹ This peninsular division was amplified and taken in new directions when Italy’s southern

15 Verdicchio 1997, 98. See also Díaz-Andreu 2007, 373–74.

16 Weber 1976, 3.

17 For full discussion, see Weber 1976.

18 Verdicchio 1997; Moe 2002; De Francesco 2013.

19 Moe 2002, 85–183.

regions engaged in armed resistance against the state formation driven by northern Italy. As Antonino De Francesco has acutely observed:

This abrupt about-turn contributed a great deal to rendering the southern population even less comprehensible from a political point of view, and the disappointment and dismay in the face of such insuppressible diversity soon spilled over into the anthropological sector. The south, hurrying to recover the many old materials of which the 18th century was such a great producer, went back to being a frontier territory, a backward and quarrelsome reality, an archaic world that was so insensitive to the civilizing instruments of politics that not even a free system of government seemed able to restore it to the nation.²⁰

Cesare Lombroso and his followers responded to this problem by developing a school of criminal anthropology, in which they argued for the racial inferiority of southern Italian culture as a whole.²¹

Italian racial science critiqued the premises of the Italian liberal state and sought to explain and remedy its social and economic problems through scientific reformism. Italian theorists were far less concerned with skin colouring than were their American counterparts, and were quite willing to blur the boundaries of European whiteness as they mapped out the racial history of Europe.²²

Since the concept was applied to fellow citizens, the Italian use of racism was different from the predominant European practice of applying racial theory to non-white colonial subjects and non-whites encountered through other forms of contact.²³

Italian anthropology, while sharing in the world trend of positivism and evolutionism, created a peculiar national configuration, the so-called “Southern Question” discourse, in which Italy’s southern regions were viewed in contemporary Orientalist and neo-colonialist terms.²⁴ Anthropology and the Southern Question developed in tandem until the coming to power of Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini in 1922, whose policies aimed to eliminate regional

20 De Francesco 2013, 134.

21 Schneider 1998; D’Agostino 2002, 320–28.

22 D’Agostino 2002, 320.

23 Díaz-Andreu 2007, 374–77.

24 Schneider 1998; Gramsci 2005.

differences and to integrate all Italian cultures and peoples in a common and equal national endeavour.²⁵

By that point, the Italian school of criminology had crossed the Atlantic Ocean to North America, being adopted and adapted in key ways that led to a second significant development. The wave of southern and eastern European migrations to North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries caused anthropology to develop further as a discipline, as a result of the encounter between these newly arrived migrants and the northern European founders of the USA and Canada.²⁶ “The techniques developed in our studies of simpler cultures are now being modified and applied to our alien groups [like the Sicilians in Chicago],” wrote one American anthropologist in 1930 while reviewing recent developments in the discipline.²⁷ Anthropology as a discipline was transformed, turning to study the simpler European cultures that now permanently settled in North America. That they could be considered the Other in a broadly similar way to the continent’s indigenous peoples was the result of Italian racial theorizing, which provided the necessary connection and explanation for the actions that followed. The adoption and adaptation of Italian anthropological thinking in North America occurred only after Italian migrants, overwhelmingly from Italy’s southern regions, had arrived there. These Italian migrants carried the anthropological burdens placed on them by the national government at home to their new homes, for the national governments of the USA and Canada received them as the Other negotiating their place within ever increasing multicultural nation-states. Racial theory supplied the social and economic framework in which to insert these newly arrived southern and eastern Europeans, who came from lesser parts of Europe where they were already being viewed through an anthropological lens and, before that, through the lens of conversion to Christianity. This disciplinary expansion of anthropology resulted in a circular argument that could now be completed.²⁸ The argument was brought full circle because of the racial theorizing that followed these migrants from Europe—namely, that the Other existed not only abroad in the form of indigenous peoples, but also at home in Europe or wherever outside it these lesser European migrants established themselves.²⁹

25 D’Agostino 2002, 338.

26 Verdicchio 1997, 92, 100–3; De Francesco 2013, 149.

27 Cole 1930, 390; cf. also D’Agostino 2002, 330; Migliore, Dorazio-Migliore, and Ingrasci 2009, 113–14.

28 Burke (1995, 44) while noting this circularity, thinks it was restricted only to ancient Europeans. This chapter expands on his notion of circularity through analogy.

29 D’Agostino 2002, 338; Díaz-Andreu 2007, 385–86.

It was in this historical context that the parallel development of anthropology and classics has to be placed. The development of classical scholarship in the century spanning roughly 1850 to 1950 mirrors what was happening in anthropological thinking in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in both general and specific ways. The anthropological introspection that New World encounters brought to Europe from the sixteenth century onward was consistently extended to ancient European history during this crucial century. Introspection and retrospection went hand in hand in a manner little appreciated until now.

I begin with the general way in which classical scholarship mirrored anthropological thinking. Modern settler colonialism, using anthropology as its intellectual arm, was projected back into antiquity.³⁰ For, just as anthropology, indigenous peoples, and acculturation became formal fields of study worldwide, at the same time, classical scholarship developed negative attitudes vis-à-vis ancient natives, which were characteristic of contemporary portrayals of the Other. For these reasons, European elites, identifying themselves as the heirs of Greeks and Romans, came to call the descendants of ancient peoples with whom they came into contact “natives” and to consider them as inferior polar opposites in much the same way as envisioned in the New World.³¹ The comparisons drawn between antiquity and the contemporary present were so absolute and overwhelming that scholars built a history of ancient Greek “colonization” on a translation mistake. This mistake, first made in the early Italian Renaissance, was to treat the ancient Greek word *apoikia*, an independent settlement apart, as synonymous with the Latin *colonia*. Thus, one regularly used “colonies” and “colonization” to describe ancient Greek migrations. Such terminology readily brings to mind ways of conceiving the ancient Greek past that resonate with both Roman and modern European colonialism. Classical antiquity provided inspiration to Europeans, who, like their ancient counterparts, spread their unquestioned higher culture to less developed peoples, using colonies as distant arms of an innovative and dynamic centre. As a result, classical and modern societies became entangled into a single whole. While we know of ancient Greek cases in which an extra-regional authority regulated the sending out and control of a veritable colony, it is clear today that before 500 BCE most Greek “colonies” and the process of “colonization” itself were far more haphazardly established and usually not controlled by a distant metropolis. State infrastructure for such control was

30 See, recently, Skinner 2012, 36–37.

31 Dietler 2005.

poorly developed or non-existent, and much private individual initiative must be allowed in these early migrations. While the Romans came closer to practising colonialism as it is conceived of in modern times, we are increasingly appreciating the differences between these two historical phenomena instead of viewing them as imitations of each other.³²

We can appreciate and judge the degree of parallelism, or the lack thereof, between the ancient and modern worlds when we consider the nineteenth-century invention of neologisms and concepts of cultural conversion that accompanied these faulty analogies and terminologies. Scholars created the terms “Hellenization,” “Romanization,” “colonialism,” and “urbanization” because they deemed these historical processes important enough to require new words. The process of converting indigenous Americans and lower class Europeans into the image of their new masters was transferred from the modern world to antiquity. The modern term “acculturation,” coined to describe this cultural change, was also developed in America as part of this process.³³ Acculturation as a term and concept were then applied to ancient Mediterranean populations by modern scholars, who increasingly depicted them as inferior and passive compared to the ancient Greeks and Romans with whom these scholars self-identified. In both cases, acculturation was thus a one-sided affair, in both antiquity and the present, as much about the study of the Other as it was practical policy on the ground.³⁴ The Savage had been decomposed, to paraphrase Anthony Padgden,³⁵ and made an object of study and thus “museumized.”³⁶ All the developments that fed this process in the twentieth century emerged in the nineteenth century.³⁷ By contrast, eighteenth-century ancient histories are sometimes much closer to recent ones in their treatment of intercultural interaction than those of the nineteenth century. They made considerably more room in their narratives for non-Greek peoples and to Greeks beyond the Aegean, who were viewed in a more positive light,

32 Terrenato 2005.

33 Cusick 1998, esp. 127–28, where it is related to late nineteenth-century notions of progress and modernization.

34 Díaz-Andreu 2007, 211–13.

35 Pagden 1993, 117.

36 The term “museumized” was used during a radio interview between the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (on Michael Enright’s show *The Sunday Edition*) and the former South African ambassador to Canada (during the Apartheid era) on January 13, 2013. At the time of writing, the podcast of the interview is no longer available on the CBC’s website or on iTunes.

37 Bayly 2004, 436–39; Osterhammel 2014, 826–27.

if not as a downright source of inspiration in the case of Persia. As one specialist has observed, "Eighteenth-century writers displayed a much more open-minded approach to ancient societies beyond Athens, and, perhaps, can serve as a useful corrective to the shortcomings of the modern discipline."³⁸

A review of the major works of English-language scholarship published between 1850 and 1950, from George Grote to Thomas Dunbabin, mirrors these developments, and permits us to see these general forces at work in specific historical accounts.³⁹ This scholarship can be divided into two phases.

The first phase spans the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century and involves the scholarship of George Grote, Edward Freeman, and John Myres. All three scholars made analogies with the settlement of modern North America in direct and indirect ways. Grote played a significant role in shaping our current narrative of ancient Greek history, often regarded as initiating the professionalization of the field.⁴⁰ He spoke of the Hellenization of non-Greeks in the colonies, but the relationship was distinctly one-sided, in favour of the Greeks: "the ascendancy of a higher over a lower civilization ... the working of concentrated townsmen ... upon dispersed, unprotected, artless villages, who could not be insensible to the charm of that superior intellect, imagination, and organization."⁴¹ Hellenization meant the cultural transformation of backward lands otherwise inhabited by people "of rude pastoral habits, dispersed either among petty hill-villages, or in caverns hewn out of the rock."⁴² Grote allowed for fusion between incoming settlers and existing natives,⁴³ but this fusion was couched in a racialized discourse (characteristic of the time) about a debased and inferior end product caused through miscegenation.⁴⁴ The Greeks were brought down, in other words, via "unrestrained voluptuous license" and thus "from partaking in that improved organisation" of Athens and Greek city-states

38 Macgregor Morris 2008, 286.

39 A focus on English-language scholarship illustrates these developments well. Given their worldwide significance and impact, however, these are developments that touched all traditions of scholarship in other languages. Nevertheless, it remains the case that migration from Britain was the most intense, providing a diaspora promoted intellectually and politically and regarded by the British themselves as having no parallel (Cohen 2008, 70–77).

40 Macgregor Morris 2008, 247.

41 Grote 1846–56, 3:495–97.

42 Grote 1846–56, 3:494.

43 Grote 1846–56, 3:494–95, 498–99.

44 Macgregor Morris 2008; Challis 2010.

around the Aegean Sea.⁴⁵ With these sentiments, Grote began the trends of Hellenocentrism and Athenocentrism that are still alive today.

The racial factor and geographical centrism of Athens were played down in the works of Freeman and Myres. Freeman ascribed ancient Sicily's success to outside settlement (likewise apparently colonial America's success too) and, as a result, argued that the true history of Sicily was owed to Greeks.⁴⁶ Freeman, however, had an open attitude towards the interaction and integration of natives and Greeks, in large part because he rightly viewed them as "near kinsfolk" of "Aryan" (to use the word then in vogue) or Indo-European origin and thus unlike the "Red Indians" (again, to use the word then in vogue) of the New World.⁴⁷ Natives and Greeks both learned and taught one another,⁴⁸ but Greeks were regarded as the superior of the two groups, and the natives becoming Hellenized without conquest.⁴⁹ Myres, for his part, was keen on finding geographical parallels in the New World for ancient Greek colonies, comparing the settlement of the Canadian grasslands northwest of the Great Lakes to the settlement of the grasslands of the Black Sea by ancient Greeks. He was also keen on emphasizing the importance of regional approaches to ancient history, especially Greek "colonization."⁵⁰ This historical analogy was also most certainly stimulated by contemporary developments. It would not have been lost on Myres that this part of Canada was then being settled by people who came from the part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire located to the northwest of the Black Sea and who settled down in the newly minted provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Many of these settlers also lived, at first, in various kinds of sod houses in much the same way as some ancient Greek settlers apparently did before building their first proper houses. Myres remained steadfast on the science of race and the existence of racial qualities until his retirement in 1939, even as fascism tried to push extreme racial theory towards the centre of the intellectual agenda and as he himself played a foundational role in the development of anthropology in Britain and around the world, for example, in his leadership roles in the Folklore Society and Royal Anthropological Society.⁵¹

45 Grote 1846–56, 1:IX and 183–84.

46 Freeman 1891–94, 1:5–8, 10, 45, 319.

47 Freeman 1891–94, 1:19–20, 308; 2: 22–23.

48 Freeman 1891–94, 1:103–4, 174.

49 Freeman 1891–94: 1:17, 151–52, 446.

50 Myres 1953, esp. 133–60; cf. Clarke 1999, 50–52.

51 Barkan 1992, 34–36.

This first phase of scholarship saw the emergence of core concepts and questions, but it is also characterized by the ambiguous and noncommittal stance of Freeman and Myres on the power differential between Greeks and non-Greeks. The anthropological thinking of these scholars' day was certainly working in the background. The second phase began in the 1920s and ended just after World War II. A noticeable change in attitude took root in scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic. Myres directly influenced two notable ancient Greek historians, Alan Blakeway and Thomas Dunbabin, who adopted more pejorative tones in describing the relations between ancient Greek "colonists" and their "native" neighbours. Blakeway's life was tragically cut short in 1936, but he had already passed the mantle to Dunbabin, his own student, who modelled the historical development of ancient Greek Sicily and southern Italy on the British Empire of his time.⁵² He did this because he was born and brought up on the colonial and imperial front lines of Australia.⁵³ Under this colonial influence, he regarded ancient Italy's natives as altogether insignificant, like the Aborigines, and certainly not capable of influencing ancient Greek settlers.⁵⁴ Ancient Italy was also considered *terra nullius* in the same way as modern European colonization considered colonized spaces: a superior culture caused the physical destruction or complete acculturation or assimilation of an inferior culture, while Greek culture remained pure throughout this process, avoiding intermixture with the locals.⁵⁵ Dunbabin put ancient Greeks on a pedestal, and his Hellenocentrism entailed the Western Greeks looking to Greece, the motherland, for all sense of cultural and economic direction. Thus, his Hellenism was anchored to Greece; it was the centre and the "colonies" were the periphery. Greece was the yardstick against which Sicily and southern Italy were measured and compared.⁵⁶ Western Greek art was at best, therefore, a pale reflection of a dynamic and innovative Greek homeland. It only followed that Western Greeks did little or none of their own manufacturing and instead exchanged staple products, like wheat, for luxury goods imported from Greece. In this exchange, Dunbabin thought the Greek "colonies" paralleled the Australia, New Zealand, and Canada of his time.⁵⁷

52 De Angelis 1998; Dyson 2006, 195–96.

53 Dunbabin 1948, VII.

54 Dunbabin 1948, 42–3, 113, 189.

55 Dunbabin 1948, VI.

56 Dunbabin 1948, 376.

57 Dunbabin 1948, VII, 214, 259.

These views were also shared by scholars based in North America. In 1927, William Dinsmoor, the distinguished architectural historian, had this to say in his still standard work on ancient Greek architecture:

As we proceed westwards among the colonies we find even more emphasis on the tendency toward ostentation, accompanied, however, by a certain amount of provincialism or “cultural lag” and also, by barbaric distortions resulting from the intermixture not only of colonists of various origins but also of native taste.⁵⁸

In 1939, the Sicilian-born and Harvard-trained historian Vincent Scramuzza, who spent most of his career teaching at Smith College, drew parallels between ancient Greek and English colonization, having fully assimilated to the dominant scholarly mindset that had emerged in international scholarship.⁵⁹ His own personal case of assimilation was almost certainly stimulated by the lynching of Italian immigrants in New Orleans in 1891, the single largest lynching in US history, where Scramuzza himself later immigrated as a young adult to join family already there.⁶⁰ Scramuzza even claimed that the decline of the ancient native Sicilians was owed to the devastating effects of alcohol, much in the same way as had happened in the New World.⁶¹ No ancient evidence exists for this comparison, but his statement reflects developments in anthropology between the world wars, one of which was the search for the reasons for the destruction of indigenous cultures in North America.

This chapter throws light on an important and influential dimension of the relationship between classics and anthropology that has been little appreciated.⁶² Intellectual developments in anthropology regarding colonization and the Other established the interpretive framework within which classical scholarship largely operated, until they came to be debated at the close of the twentieth century. To quote Gruen again, the “potent impact on scholarship” that the Other has had in the study of antiquity must be embedded in the context of world historical developments from 1850 to 1950. These developments allowed and inspired earlier generations of scholars to see what

58 Dinsmoor 1927, 75. Cf. Dyson 2006, 196.

59 Scramuzza 1939.

60 On this lynching, see Verdicchio 1997, 105; cf. D'Agostino 2002, 329; Osterhammel 2014, 856.

61 Scramuzza 1939, 312.

62 Cf. Bettini 2010; Detienne 2007; 2008.

they wanted to see in the ancient texts.⁶³ They were often consciously aware of and highly amenable to adopting and amplifying the prejudices of these ancient texts,⁶⁴ using them to modernize traditional societies at home and abroad, in both ancient and modern times. These scholars were also shaped by their own world and acted in ways they considered logical and meaningful. Since all historical research, past, present, and future, is informed by its times, we should not condemn these scholars, but we should factor the history of anthropology into the development of classicists' thinking about ancient culture contact.

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63 Lambropoulos 1993, 328; Dietler 2005, 34.

64 As noted, for example, by Johann Gottfried Herder in the early nineteenth century. For discussion, see Harloe 2013, 229–32.

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Comparativism Then and Now

William Michael Short and Maurizio Bettini

Is a comparative anthropology of the ancient world possible?¹ The ancients certainly had no doubts on this score. Cornelius Nepos found it perfectly reasonable to juxtapose key Greek and Roman social configurations such as rules of marriage, male and female sexual behaviour, and concepts of honour,² which led him to a relativistic stance—“the standard for judging what is respectable and shameful is not the same for all men, and all things must be judged according to the traditions of the ancestors (*omnia maiorum institutis iudicari*)”—that anticipates Melville Herskovits.³ Plutarch, too, in constructing pluralistic interpretations of Roman customs did not hesitate to contrast Roman behaviours with Greek ones, including those of his “own” Greeks (the Boeotians of Chaeronea) or those of the sanctuary at Delphi, where he had once been a priest.⁴ Yet the history of cultural comparison within the field of classical studies suggests the answer is not so straightforward. Indeed, apart from some aspects of the European Renaissance (when, as Lévi-Strauss wrote, Humanism “realized the means of putting its own culture in perspective, by confronting contemporary concepts with those of other times and places”)⁵ and the scholarly career of Christian Gottlob Heyne (1739–1812) (who insisted on using the customs of what he called “savage” (*Wilden*) cultures to help explain those of Greek culture) comparison of the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome to one another, let alone to other cultures ancient or modern, has

1 A full treatment of these same themes may be found in Bettini 2005; 2009; 2010; 2011, and Short 2013.

2 Nep. 1.4.1–7.2.

3 Herskovits 1948. This stance is also detectable in Herodotus in the famous episode where Darius compares the funerary rites of the Greeks and Indian Callati (Hdt. 3.38.3–4). Arguments similar to Nepos’—and in an entirely parallel context, namely the relativization of “the good” (καλόν) and “the shameful” (αἰσχρόν)—recur in the Sophistic *Dissoi Logoi*.

4 Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 16.267d and 23.269b. On “instabilité du sens” as a characteristic trait of Plutarch’s research, see De Fontenay 1998, 171. Lévi-Strauss (1981, 42), discussing Plut. *De Is. et Osir.* 45.369, thoroughly approved of this method.

5 Lévi-Strauss 1976, 272.

largely been neglected (if not, in fact, rejected outright) by classical scholars as an interpretive strategy. But why?

Because the “primitive” Greek culture he was interested in was temporally so distant, Heyne viewed the readiest source of evidence for understanding the *genius* or “spirit” of this culture to be ethnographic reporting.⁶ Judging Greek culture by contemporary standards of behaviour would be misleading, since Greek culture appears to have come into being in conditions closer to what could be observed among contemporary “primitive” peoples of America, Asia, and Africa: thus, it is through “comparison with savage and barbarous peoples” that the “life of the most ancient men, especially in Greece” could best be explained.⁷ This was not a view shared by most of Heyne’s contemporaries, however. In fact, a new scholarly program, *Altertumswissenschaft*, and a more general intellectual and aesthetic paradigm emerging in Germany during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended instead to idealize Greek culture as uniquely “creative” and “original” and to uphold ancient Greece as a model of civilization. This idealization is perhaps best represented by Friedrich Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who as Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Prussia wrote:

In the Greeks we have before us a nation in whose fortunate hands everything, which, according to our deepest feelings, sustains the noblest and richest aspects of human existence, matured to the utmost perfection ... To know them is for us not just pleasant, advantageous and indispensable; only in them do we find the ideal of that which we ourselves should like to be and to produce.⁸

Viewed in such terms, Greek culture inevitably becomes incomparable with any other culture—certainly not with “savage” cultures, but also not with Roman culture, which was considered merely a poor imitation of Greek culture.⁹

German *Altertumswissenschaft* and its direct descendant, twentieth-century classical philology, with their strongly historical and contextualizing perspective and their devotion to ancient (especially Greek) culture as

6 Heidenreich 2006, 388–93; Fornaro 2004.

7 As in the titles of his works, *Vita antiquissimorum hominum, Graeciae maxime, ex ferorum et barbarorum populorum comparatione illustrata: Commentatio I* and *Vita antiquioris Graeciae ex ferorum et barbarorum populorum comparatione illustrata: Commentatio II*, both of 1779.

8 Translation of McNerney 1999, 10.

9 A view which has only recently begun to fade, see Feeney 1998.

uniquely creative, came to predominate within classical studies, spelling the end of any comparative approach like Heyne's. Nevertheless, comparativism resurfaced in the second half of the nineteenth century in England, in James George Frazer's (1854–1941) *The Golden Bough*, where Roman material mixes freely with evidence from all corners of the globe: Greek, Arab, Indian, Australian. A true triumph of comparative anthropology, if only Frazer's methodology were not so obviously problematic! Its faults are well known: Frazer gathers fragments of ethnographic knowledge under a running series of general entries with titles such as "homeopathic" or "imitative magic" or "succession to the soul," pairing *comparata* and *comparanda* in a way that suggests the meaning of this material is predetermined.¹⁰ Moreover, as his aim is to describe "the evolution of primitive religion and society,"¹¹ again according to general hypotheses (e.g., "like produces like"), his organization of the evidence adheres to an unmistakable structure of phases and developments.¹² Finally, Frazer's basis for comparison appears to be the conviction that ancient "popular beliefs"—like the one on which he based his interpretation of the *aureus ramus* that gave inspiration, and a title, to his work—can, and should be, treated like those of any other "savage" culture, since there undoubtedly exists "a layer of savagery beneath the surface of ancient society."¹³ Ancient culture can be compared to "savage" cultures because it is in large part also "savage."

In 1908, Robert R. Marett (1866–1943) published a collection of six articles by prestigious scholars of the time (Sir Arthur Evans, Andrew Lang, Gilbert Murray, F. B. Jevons, J. L. Myres, and William Warde Fowler) under the promising title of *Anthropology and the Classics*, but was unable to articulate a true union of the two disciplines. Anthropology dealt with cultures "of the simpler or lower kind," whereas the classics have "their parent source in the literatures of Greece and Rome" with "whatever is most constitutive and characteristic of

10 Frazer (1931) is a true "manifesto" of the analogical method, which for comparative purposes seeks out similarities between cultures. Frazer's tended to favour similarities over insisting instead on the "importance for social anthropology, as a comparative discipline, of differences" (Evans-Pritchard 1965, 25).

11 Frazer 1906–15, 3:IX.

12 For criticism of Frazer's method, see especially Clemente 1984, Dei 1998, and Clemente, Dei and Simonica 2008.

13 Frazer 1931, 130. This belief is not so different from what is expressed by Thucydides in his "archaeology," sustaining that "The ancient Greeks (τὸ παλαιὸν Ἑλληνικόν) had customs similar to those of today's barbarians" (*Hist.* 1.6.6). Anyone's "ancients" may occasionally raise the disturbing suspicion of having been "savages."

the higher life of society.”¹⁴ Marett, therefore, was forced to appeal to a vague category of “phenomena of transition” in which the “high” cultures of classical antiquity and “low” cultures of anthropological research could meet halfway, as well as to the unique talents of the individual scholars who participated in that endeavour. The scholarship of Herbert Jennings Rose (1883–1961) and the aforementioned William Warde Fowler (1847–1941) represented an exception to classicists’ anti-comparativism but followed an essentially Frazerian model.¹⁵ W. F. Jackson Knight (1895–1964) was perhaps more innovative.¹⁶ Although his *Cumaeae Gates* of 1936 looks to Frazer’s work in many respects, its conclusion is based on a very different principle of interpretation: Virgil’s *Aeneid* can be compared with Malekula beliefs or the story of Gilgamesh, for instance, because it embodies a universal cultural paradigm of initiation.¹⁷ For Jackson Knight, the possibility of comparing a Roman text to the myths and beliefs of other populations, in fact, depends on the nature of poetic genius, which has special access to a sort of ahistorical, transcultural world of Jungian “archetypes.”¹⁸ A peculiar theory, to say the least, since “ferce originality”¹⁹—and so incomparability—is normally considered a hallmark of “genius.”²⁰

Jackson Knight’s comparative approach never gained much traction among Virgilians, let alone among classicists at large. In the decades since his *Cumaeae Gates*, cultural studies of the ancient world certainly have increased, yielding important advances in our knowledge on themes such as kinship, images, public behaviour, the body, writing, or bilingualism.²¹ However, classicists who

14 Marett 1908, 3.

15 See Warde Fowler 1916; 1920.

16 See, for example, Jackson Knight 1967.

17 Interestingly, Layard’s (1936) study of Malekula ceremonies and of Jackson Knight’s work has recently attracted the attention of an anthropologist like Gell (1998).

18 Jung (explicitly cited by Jackson Knight) had introduced the concept of “archetypes” into the psychology of the unconscious in 1921, based on the theory “racial memory” in early psychoanalysis. This approach was vehemently criticized by Malinowski in an essay published in 1928: “the psychoanalytic theory stands and falls with the assumption of a “race memory” and a “race unconscious” which will be accepted by few anthropologists who do not belong to the inner ring of ardent Freudians” (1962, 290).

19 Bloom 2002, 11.

20 On this fascinating figure, who, while working on his translation of the *Aeneid*, believed he was in contact with the spirit of Virgil through a medium, see Wiseman 1992, 192–206.

21 I.e., Moreau 2003; Dupont and Auvray-Assayas 1998; Dupont 2000; Moreau 2002; Valette-Cagnac 1997; Dupont and Valette-Cagnac 2005, for further bibliography, see also Bettini 2010.

have dedicated themselves most vigorously to this kind of study have rarely given much credit to comparison. While unquestionably anthropological in approach, the studies of Florence Dupont and her school, for instance, noticeably eschew that “comparative sociology” identified by Radcliffe-Brown as the essence of anthropology, not to mention large-scale intercultural comparisons along the lines of Lévi-Strauss’ *Mythologiques*.²² In recent years, the more an anthropologist of Roman culture presents him- or herself as comparativist, the more he or she is perceived to be outside of classical studies. This may be because the displeasure that classical philologists felt at ancient Greece and Rome being likened to other cultures in Frazer’s work—where material from “primitive” cultures appears alongside historical and philological notes to explain Ovid, Pausanias, or Apollodorus—has not yet dissipated. In other words, classicists may still not wish to admit that the cultures they study no longer have the privilege of being the most original or the most beautiful.²³

It is probably also the classicist’s scholarly identity that is felt to be at stake. For today’s Latinist, Frazer’s commentary on Ovid’s *Fasti*, full of tattooed Arundas, Moroccans, Indians, and Russians, is frankly unacceptable. Leading scholars nowadays declare their intention to clear Ovid’s text from the “collective codes” imposed on it by the anthropologists and historians of religions, in order to return to the dignity or substance of the text.²⁴ Obviously, this is a scholarly project that can only be wholeheartedly endorsed—all the more so because of its absolute sympathy with the notions that every culture must be examined above all “on its own terms” and that its texts must be read for their content, rather than disarranged and distributed here and there as if they were flyers for cultural tourism. Yet it bears emphasizing that in the *Fasti*, which Latinists intend to “save” from Frazerianism, Ovid actually follows a very Frazerian method: both authors attempted to transform the dry material of erudition and folklore into literature; both looked beneath the surface of an extremely advanced and refined society—in Ovid’s case, that of Augustan Rome; in Frazer’s, that of Victorian England—to find unknown origins and uncover wild, disturbing traditions.²⁵ Not only this. If philologists

22 Radcliffe-Brown 1956; 1958.

23 See Ackerman 1987, 129–30; Dei 1998, 320–41.

24 See Barchiesi 1997, 50; see also 49: “Critical interest has been monopolized by the religious and folkloristic material that can be extracted from the poem, and what spirit of inquiry is left over after this search for the golden bough is often dedicated to easily defined subjected-headings, such as frivolity, libertinage, Greek cooking ...”

25 Kezich 1984, 63–66; Dei 1998, 107–8. On the notoriously “literary” quality of Frazer’s anthropology, see esp. Dei 1998, 304–19, 393–403. (Frazer himself, moreover, at

and anthropologists together accused Frazer of decontextualizing his evidence, postmodernist anthropology has now endorsed precisely this kind of contextual play that leaves the reader to choose between interpretations. It invites us to read Frazer's interminable "collages" in a newly polyphonic and intertextual way (and also to reconsider Plutarch's "dialogic" method of cultural explanation).²⁶

Perhaps, however, classicists' resistance to comparativism cannot be laid at the doorstep either of some perceived loss of status or of Frazer's untenable methodology (even if this can be in some sense reclaimed within a postmodernist anthropology). Another cause may be our "closeness" to the ancients, especially to the Romans. Indeed, a considerable portion of the population living in modern Europe descends directly from the people of Rome, speaks languages stemming from Latin, or participates in cultures derived from Roman culture. These are populations that live in the same places the Romans lived and that have continuously looked upon and inhabited the physical remains of Roman culture. In many areas, these populations still speak something very close to the Latin language, though altered by "linguistic drift."²⁷ Moreover, across the centuries, Europeans and Westerners have continued to read the same "books" as the Romans and to study the Latin language. Françoise Waquet has underscored how long the "Empire of Latin" was able to keep the West under its sway.²⁸ From Italy to the Russia of Peter III, from Holland to Germany, from Spain to Poland, to the missions and schools of the New World, students aspiring to receive an education all started from the "rules" of the Latin language. But it is not only a question of language. In reading Latin texts practically continuously since the first century CE, Westerners have assimilated a vision of the world, of society, of politics, of personal relations, that is essentially Roman. When our books are Roman books, and our languages are Roman languages, our culture is also Roman culture.

This makes it exceedingly difficult for us to observe the Romans with that "gaze from afar" necessary for any anthropological approach. The Romans are

the beginning of *The Golden Bough* (1911, VIII) calls himself an "artist"); for Frazer's commentary to the *Fasti*, see the very positive judgment of Ackerman 1987, 297–300.

26 See also Strathern 1988. Dei (1998, 405) articulates the same position in a very interesting way.

27 Proust has already written: "Those French words which we are so proud of pronouncing accurately are themselves only blunders made by the Gallic lips which mispronounced Latin or Saxon, our language being merely a defective pronunciation of several others" (2006, 125).

28 Waquet 2001.

familiar to us, and this presents a challenge to comparison: comparing the Romans to others would practically be like comparing ourselves to others, something we know is not at all easy. Having studied Latin for so long, and having based our learned language on it, there is no escaping that we have to some degree—and probably to a great degree—already assimilated this language’s “hidden metaphysics.”²⁹ This does not imply that a comparative approach to Roman culture is impossible, only that a workable approach remains to be articulated. And in trying to articulate such an approach, we can turn—as the Romans themselves would have done when confronting a difficult question—to our “best” anthropological *maiores*.³⁰ First is Clyde Kluckhohn, who throughout his work stressed the inseparability of anthropology from what we might call “peculiarities.” For Kluckhohn, the anthropologist is the person who, setting out along the path of “queer customs” (as in the title of the first chapter of *Mirror for Man*) and takes the “longest way round,” only to discover that this is the shortest route to reach an understanding of man.³¹ In other words, it is through “peculiarities” that the anthropologist can free him- or herself from the constraints of any local vision of humanity. Second is Clifford Geertz, who has often spoken of the centrality of “oddities” to anthropological investigation, as, for example, when he writes: “It may be in the cultural particularities of people—in their oddities—that some of the most instructive revelations of what it is to be generically human are to be found.”³² Of course, “oddities” are not there to be jettisoned in favour of “universal” traits nor to be bandied about by those whom Geertz called “merchants of astonishment”:³³ they are important precisely because they instil in the observer a sensation of difference.³⁴

29 Whorf 1956.

30 See the anecdote told by Cicero (*Leg.* 2.16.40) of the Athenians interrogating the oracle at Delphi after they had been told to heed the custom (*mos*) of their ancestors: since this had changed many times, they asked *which* of those customs specifically they should heed, to which the oracle responded, “The best.” The same story is told by Xenophon (*Mem.* 4.3.15) but much more succinctly.

31 Kluckhohn 1949, 9–16.

32 Geertz 1973, 43.

33 Geertz 1984, 275.

34 Of course, long before Kluckhohn, the Greeks had already signalled the importance of the “marvellous” (τὸ θαῦμα) as a spur to reflection: e.g., Pl. *Theaet.* 155d; Arist. *Met.* 982b1–19. Incidentally, this is why Horace’s *nil admirari* in the sixth epistle of the first book has always seemed suspect, though in that part of the work the author is dealing with existential concerns.

The comparative anthropologist of the Roman world, then, must focus on the “oddities” of Roman culture, estranging him- or herself from this culture and emphasizing both what the Romans did but we do not, and what we do but the Romans did not—as well as how the behaviours of other cultures (and especially of Greek culture) differ in this respect. Of course, to break free from our own culture’s identification with Roman culture, there is hardly any need to return to the “savage” comparison of Heyne or Frazer. Nor are we suggesting that the anthropologist of ancient culture establish a personal *Wunderkammer* full of dragons, mermaids, and monstrous births patiently extracted from Cicero’s *On Divination* or Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*³⁵ or draw up lists of forgotten and bizarre words like some modern-day Festus. When we say that cultural or linguistic “oddities” should be the basis for comparative study, by “oddities” we mean cultural configurations that are normal and predictable—institutions, conceptions, and behaviours (including or especially linguistic behaviours)—but that in Roman society take on forms that are, for us, unexpected. The kind of comparativism appropriate for a contemporary Roman anthropology is therefore one that aspires to juxtapose Roman culture and Greek culture, with the possibility of comparing these cultures with others both ancient and modern. Above all, this new comparativism will be one based more on the differences than on the similarities observed between cultures, more on what is present and what is absent—what seems “odd”—than on presumed correspondences between cultures that are geographically and temporally distant. If Frazer in 1931 based his method exclusively on the similarities between cultures,³⁶ today’s comparative research must be oriented instead towards their differences, presenting experimental and constructive juxtapositions that avoid predetermining the meaning of any specific cultural configuration in placing it alongside supposedly analogous representations.³⁷

In what follows, we illustrate one possible comparative approach to Roman culture that begins from differences in metaphorical usage in language. Linguistic metaphors are, we believe, particularly apt for comparative anthropological analysis because, as an immense interdisciplinary bibliography now demonstrates, it is through its metaphorical imagery that a language often reveals the conceptual forms or mental models that organize the culture to which it belongs (especially when these metaphors seem to be organized into systems). Moreover, the metaphors that the speakers of different languages use in expressing the same concepts are often strikingly

35 See Daston and Park 2001.

36 See Evans-Pritchard 1965.

37 See Detienne 2007; 2008.

different, and such “oddities” of conceptualization raise interesting cultural questions. Consider, for instance, that English speakers’ understanding of a *mistake* appears to depend on a theory of truth that is constituted through what Michael Reddy has called the “conduit” metaphor.³⁸ In this metaphor, which has predominated in English speakers’ conception at least since the Industrial Revolution in Britain, words are imagined simply as “containers” for the ideas (propositions) they express—the “truth” is thus a correspondence of verbally expressed propositions to real-world states of affairs.³⁹ In English, therefore, a *mis-take* is a failure to metaphorically “get” or “obtain” or “extract” the propositional content from an expression (or behaviour grounded in such a failure). Meanwhile, Greek and Latin speakers rely on quite different images to convey this “same” concept of mistakenness. In Greek, this concept is delivered primarily by the verb ἀμαρτάνω and its derivatives, which refer literally to “missing a target.” In Latin, by contrast, it is conveyed by *errō* and its derivatives, which literally denote “wandering from a path.”

But is this difference in metaphorical imagery a difference that makes a difference? We would argue that it is much more than merely a linguistic curiosity. This difference also bears significantly not only on how speakers of these languages conceived of mistakenness but also on their attitudes and values towards—thus behaviours and practices in respect of—making mistakes. Here, we focus on how Latin’s “wandering” metaphor, as part of a generalized spatial conceptualization of knowledge, can be distinguished from the Greek metaphor as a “folk model” with widespread semantic effects and recognizable cultural implications.

Consider the metaphors converging on this concept in Greek. In addition to the “missile” metaphor, images recruited from a broad range of human experience help define this concept: For example, the value of the prepositions ἀπό, κατά, and παρά in compounds like ἀποπιστεύω, καταδοξάζω, and παραγιγνώσκω suggests a metaphor in which what is “correct” or “true” corresponds to a determined location, so that what is “away from,” “down (from?),” or “from the side of” this location is mistaken. Figurative usage of σφάλω and πταίω instead reflects a metaphor in which mistakenness is conceived in terms of bodily “stumbling” or “falling,” while παρόραμα or ἀβλέπημα and ἀλόγημα are metaphors from vision and reckoning, in which mistakenness is understood as a perceptual or arithmetical failure. The meanings of πλανάω (“cause to

38 Reddy 1979.

39 For examples of expressions that embody this metaphor, see Reddy 1979; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 10–12 and Grady 1998.

wander” and, passively, “be mistaken”) suggest Greek also has a version of the “wandering” metaphor.

Now consider Latin’s metaphors of mistakenness. Certain similarities and differences are easily discerned. Several metaphors appear to be shared between the two systems. We have already mentioned the “wandering” metaphor underlying the metaphorical meaning of *erro* in Latin and of *πλανάω* in Greek.⁴⁰ Latin also has a “stumbling” or “falling” metaphor akin to Greek’s, as reflected by *fallor* (“be mistaken,” from root **fal-*, lit. “trip, cause to fall”), *offendo* (lit. “dash (the foot) against something”), *labor* (lit. “slip; fall”) and *pecco* (< **ped-*, “fall”: cf. Vedic *pádyate* “falls” and *padáyate* “causes to fall”; Old English *gefetan* “fall”; Old Church Slavic *pasti* “fall.”).⁴¹ Moreover, the image of “being apart from” motivating the figurative sense of the Greek prepositions probably also gives the meaning of the Latin adverb *perperam* (“incorrectly”) and adjective *perperus* (“wrong-headed”), since etymologically speaking these words signify position “on the other side of.”⁴² In contrast, Latin speakers do not normally talk about “making a mistake” in terms of visual perception,⁴³ and Greek’s “missile” metaphor is conspicuously absent. They also conceptualize mistakenness in ways that Greek speakers do not: if *perversus* and *depravatus* reflect a general “structural deformation” metaphor like Greek’s, in Latin *deformis* (“misshapen”) and *mendosus* (from *menda*, “a blemish (of the face)”), what is “mistaken” is viewed more specifically in terms of bodily disfigurement.

What accounts for such a diversity of metaphorical imagery in Greek and Latin speakers’ talk about mistakenness? Where a concept is defined by several distinct metaphors, cognitive linguists argue that these metaphors typically collaborate to produce an understanding of that concept’s various aspects. Although the metaphors may recruit different conceptual materials

40 Evidence from Sanskrit and Gothic suggest the metaphor may in fact belong to Indo-European. It may well be universal, in fact: see Danaher 2003, 448–9, for extensive data from Russian; for Semitic, see *Hos.* 5:5; *Prov.* 4:11–12 and 24:16; *Jer.* 39:9b, et al., also in Syriac. Bengali likely inherits the Sanskrit metaphor, see Sen 2005, 2.

41 Again Sanskrit *skhalate* (“stumble; trip”) as well as “err; be mistaken”) and the stem *bhra-* meaning both “waver, be unsteady” and “be mistaken,” suggest the metaphor is inherited.

42 They are both from **pero-*; the reduplication may be due to the original meaning of the stem becoming opaque; or the reconstruction may be **per-poro-* “going to the other side of,” see De Vaan 2008, 461. The word *vitium* may even fit here, if the reconstruction from **(d)yi-* (as also in *duo*) is correct: in this case, a “mistake” being seen again as the condition of “being apart, separate,” see De Vaan 2008, 684.

43 *Caecus error* is an exclusively poetic formulation, e.g., Sen. *Herc.* 1096; Sil. *Pun.* 15.619; Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 20.363.

and so fail to provide a consistent image to conceptualization, they nevertheless tend to fit together coherently as an overall system. Each metaphor targets the understanding of some dimension of the metaphorically defined concept that is not covered, or only partially covered, by the others.⁴⁴ We might think of the metaphors of love used by the Latin elegists: hunting, military service, slavery, fire, disease, madness, and exile. All of these metaphors help characterize various aspects or phases of the erotic relationship: seduction, passion, devotion (or helpless dependency), and separation.⁴⁵

In the same way, within the systems of metaphor that define mistakenness in Greek and Latin, each constituent image appears to target some special dimension of the understanding of “making a mistake.” For example, the “structural deformation” image seems to focus on mistakenness as an anomalous state of knowledge with respect to some absolute standard of truth. In Latin, where another entrenched metaphor orients what is good as “up” and what is bad as “down,” the image probably also imparts a strongly negative moral value to mistakes. The image of mistakenness as being “apart (from)” a location similarly emphasizes the “fixity” of what is true as independent and autonomous of any subjectivity, and the contingency of “a mistake” in respect to this fixed standard. The “falling” or “stumbling” metaphor, meanwhile, seems to relate to the unpredictability or involuntariness of mistakenness, implying that a mistake is brought about by factors largely extrinsic to the person who makes it. Greek’s metaphors from sight and calculation, in contrast, highlight the connection between an individual’s perceptual and intellectual capabilities and mistakenness. Latin’s “disfigurement” metaphor seems instead to locate the origins of mistakenness in the human bodily condition: in these terms, “making a mistake” is seen almost as the outcome of intrinsic personal defects.

Latin’s “wandering” metaphor and Greek’s “missile” metaphor are comparable in their focus on the concept of mistakenness in its basic relation to rational thought and, in this sense, can probably be considered “privileged” conceptualizations in their respective contexts.⁴⁶ Although offering up quite different images to conceptualization, in both metaphors, correct reasoning is conceived as motion along a path toward a predetermined goal. In cognitive

44 See Kövecses 2010, 149–67, and Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 87–105, on the “coherence” of metaphor systems.

45 See Kennedy 1993, 46ff. and Wyke 1989.

46 The “privileged” or “preferential conceptualization” refers to the metaphor that provides the most frequent, most systematically coherent, most potentially elaborated, and most experientially motivated model for conceptualizing a given target domain (see Kövecses 2005, 82–86).

linguistics terms, this conceptualization could be described as a series of conceptual correspondences in which the notions of motion toward, the path of this motion, and its destination, are mapped to the reasoning process. This can also be described in “image schematic” terms. An image schema is a highly abstract structure of cognition that emerges through human perceptual and sensory-motor interaction with the world. As Mark Johnson writes, “a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience.”⁴⁷ Specifically, rational thought appears to be conceived in terms of what cognitive linguists refer to as the source-path-goal schema, which portrays to the imagination a “trajector” (a dynamic foreground entity) that traces a path from one landmark (static background entity) to a definite fixed endpoint.⁴⁸ Of course, in the Latin metaphor, the trajector corresponds to the thinker who “travels” toward the truth—“destination,” while in the Greek metaphor it corresponds to the thinker’s thought which is “shot” at the truth—“target.” In both, however, failure to traverse the preordained trajectory directly constitutes a failure of reasoning: a mistake.

Despite sharing the same conceptual underpinnings—and so representing, to a certain degree, the “same” concept—it is clear that Greek’s “missile” metaphor and Latin’s “wandering” metaphor of mistakenness enjoy very different statuses in the overall symbolic systems of the speakers of these languages, with important cultural consequences. In the first place, the increasing predominance of ἀμαρτάνω’s “mistaking” sense in this word’s semantic structure diachronically—so that in the Christian period its literal sense is almost entirely forgotten—tends to mask the fact that the Greek “missile” metaphor remains linguistically quite circumscribed. Ἀμπλακέω and ἀλιταίνω, for instance, may show the same figurative development, but these words belong to a specialized and temporally restricted poetic vocabulary.⁴⁹ At the same time, the possible meanings of ἀστοχέω demonstrate that the metaphor does not have systematic effects. Although it has the same literal meaning as ἀμαρτάνω, this verb and its derivatives are not conventionally used in the figurative “mistaking” sense; such usage is, in fact, restricted entirely to the language of Polybius.⁵⁰

47 Johnson 1987, xiv. See also Hampe and Grady 2005; Lakoff 1990; 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1999.

48 On the concepts of “trajector” and “landmark” in cognitive grammar and their role in image schematic structure, see Talmy 1988.

49 See Bremer 1969, 26n12.

50 E.g., Polyb. *Hist.* 1.74.2, ἀστόχως, “amiss” and 2.33.8, διὰ τὴν ἀστοχίαν, “by mistake.” Nor, in general, do we find effects of the “missile” metaphor outside of this limited semantic field. For instance, though a word like βέλος, “missile,” may have afforded to Greek authors a productive image for metaphorizing many different kinds of

We find the “missile” metaphor above all in contexts where authors wish to call attention to its figurativeness for some creative purpose.⁵¹ In Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, Apollo rests his case in defence of Orestes: ἡμῖν μὲν ἤδη πᾶν τετόξευται βέλος, “For my part, every arrow has already been shot.”⁵² Here, the image of “arguments” as “arrows” is contextually motivated, a clever expression in the mouth of a god whose sphere of divine power includes both archery and reason. Similarly, the choice of an archery contest as the scene for the revelation of the beggar’s identity in the *Odyssey* is no doubt motivated by several considerations.⁵³ But at a very basic level the scene “makes sense” in that it literalizes the symbolic association captured by the “missile” metaphor: the moment at which Odysseus hits the target coincides with that of knowing the truth of his return. Elsewhere, as Carin Green has pointed out, the “missile” metaphor is used especially in the elaboration of philosophical concepts.⁵⁴ For instance, archery provided Plato with a metaphor for just lawgiving and eudaimonism,⁵⁵ while Aristotle likened knowledge of the good to hitting a target.⁵⁶ Stobaeus distinguished the “goal” (τέλος) of one’s life from its “target” (σκοπός) to express the difference between one’s ideal purpose and the corporeal manifestations of its attainment. Similarly, Panaetius compared the pursuit of individual goals to aiming at different marks on the same target.⁵⁷

experience—glances of the eyes (Aesch. *Ag.* 742, μαλθακὸν ὀμμάτων βέλος, or 241–2 ἀπ’ ὀμματος βέλει φιλοίκτω); heavy rainfall (Soph. *Ant.* 358, πάγων δύσομβρα βέλη); mental anguish (Pind. *Nem.* 1.48–49, ἐκ δ’ ἄρ’ ἄτλατον δέος πλάξε γυναῖκας); desire (Aesch. *Prom.* 649–51, Ζεὺς γὰρ ἡμέρου βέλει / πρὸς σοῦ τέθαλπται καὶ συναίρεσθαι Κύπριν / θέλει); hate (Anth. Pal. 10.111, ὁ φθόνος αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν εἰς βελέεσσι δαμάζει)—it does not seem to be idiomatic in Greek to speak of thoughts as “arrows” ... let alone of the mind as a “bow” or, say, a “quiver.” In this sense, Greek’s “missile” metaphor can be considered a “dead” metaphor.

- 51 In Plato’s *Philebus*, Socrates exclaims that for the long discussion ahead of him he will need “a new contrivance—other weapons, as it were (οἷον βέλη)” (23b). In the *Symposium*, Socrates says of his debate with Alcibiades: “I exchanged these words with him and, as it were, let fly my shafts (ἀφείξω ὥσπερ βέλη)” (219b).
- 52 Aesch. *Eum.* 676. The mss. attribute 676–77 to the Chorus. However, following Simon Karsten’s edition, most editors now give them to Apollo; see Winnington-Ingram 1983, 219, for discussion of internal evidence in favour of this attribution. Of course, the image could just as easily be ironic.
- 53 Ready 2010.
- 54 Green 1996, 221–31.
- 55 E.g., *Leg.* 706a1 and *Gorg.* 507c1–6.
- 56 E.g., Ar. *EN.* 1094a22–4, ἄρ’ οὖν καὶ πρὸς τὸν βίον ἡ γνώσις αὐτοῦ μεγάλην ἔχει ῥοπήν, καὶ καθάπερ τοξόται σκοπὸν ἔχοντες μάλλον ἂν τυγχάνοιμεν τοῦ δέοντος. See Lasky, 1994.
- 57 Fr. 109 van Straaten. See Inwood 1986.

The metaphor also appears in Greek theorizing about perception, prophecy, and emotion.⁵⁸ For this reason, the Greek “missile” metaphor may justifiably be considered what cognitive anthropology calls an “expert” model—in that it provides an image to the Greek imagination especially for the construction and development of theoretical models in technical, specialist contexts.⁵⁹

Latin’s “wandering” metaphor, conversely, participates in a large-scale metaphorical pattern in which not only “mistakenness” and “falseness” but also “correctness” and “trueness”—and, indeed, many other aspects of mental life—are expressed in terms of movement in physical space, as a feature of everyday speech.⁶⁰ It structures polysemy across the lexicon of “wandering,” for instance: not only *erro* but also of *vagor* and *pamor* can be used figuratively in the sense of “mistaking.”⁶¹ Indeed, as evidence from Latin literature demonstrates, nearly the entire field of words literally denoting motion away from (“departing” (*discedere*), “going away” (*recedere*), “turning away” (*avertere*), “leading away” (*abducere*), “directing away” (*deflectere*), “pushing away” (*depellere*) can be used with the preposition *a* and either *vero* or *veritate* to convey notions of mistakenness or falseness. The vocabulary of physical movement is employed in a systematic way to deliver figurative meaning, as shown by expressions such as “For he who has once been dishonest (*qui semel a veritate deflexit*), is easily persuaded with no greater scruples to perjury than to a lie (*non maiore religione ad periurium quam ad mendacium perducere consuevit*)”⁶² or “Who can be so mistaken (*aversus a vero*)?”⁶³ The metaphor operates at a level of meaning that is supralexic, structuring figurative usage over the range of words denoting motion away. This is why it also makes sense in Latin to speak of something as being “distant from” (*procul* or *distat a*)⁶⁴ or “on the farther side of” (*ultra*)⁶⁵ or “outside of” (*extra*)⁶⁶ the truth, to indicate that it is false or incorrect.

58 Graf 2008; Stanford 1936; Keith 1914, 122.

59 For definitions of and a survey of scholarly literature related to “expert” models within cognitive anthropology, cognitive linguistics, and cultural semiotics, see esp. Gentner and Stevens 1983.

60 See Short 2012.

61 For their metaphorical senses, see Cic. *Off.* 2.7, *vagetur animus errore nec habeat umquam quid sequatur* and Ov. *Met.* 15.150, *palantes homines passim ac rationis egentes*.

62 Cic. *Q. Rosc.* 46.

63 Cic. *Cat.* 3.21.

64 E.g., Sallust, *Epistula ad Caesarem* 1 2.4, *procul a vero*; Ov. *Trist.* 5.6.27; Luc. *RN.* 1.758, *a vero ... distet*.

65 E.g., Ps.-Var., *Sententiae* 139, *ultra veritatem est, qui in planis quaerit offendiculum*.

66 E.g., Sen. *Dial.* 7.5.2, *extra veritatem proiectus*.

Correspondingly, notions of correctness or trueness are conveyed in Latin by terms literally denoting motion toward “going” (*ire*), “coming” (*venire*), “arriving” (*pervenire*), “proceeding” (*pergere*), “turning” (*convertere*), “approaching” (*accedere*) along with a prepositional phrase made up of the preposition *ad* and either *verum* or *veritatem*. What is true or correct is again construed metaphorically as a fixed destination. This metaphorical use of the vocabulary of “motion toward” in a sense antonymous to “mistaking” is illustrated by, for example, in Plautus: “By god, if you make the slightest mistake (*si hercle tantillum peccassis*), even if afterwards you wish to correct yourself (*quod posterius postules te ad verum convorti*), you’ll be wasting your time, lady.”⁶⁷ It is also illustrated by Aulus Gellius: “By assaying many things they suddenly and unknowingly come to know the truth (*incidunt ... in veritatem*).”⁶⁸ Relative progress towards this truth-“destination” thus conveys different degrees of trueness or correctness. This is why, for example, the expression *ad veritatem propius* or *proxime* or *maxime accedere*—literally, “come closer (closest) to the truth”—has the sense of “have a better (the best) knowledge of what is true” in the philosophical works of Cicero and Seneca⁶⁹ or why, later, for Tertullian and Lactantius “being in the truth” (*in vero esse*) means, metaphorically, to be true in an absolute sense (the expression is likely borrowed from Roman law, where *in veritate esse* refers to something’s “real” value, rather its value for a plaintiff).⁷⁰ By the same logic, something that comes “out of” or “from” this truth-“destination” shares in trueness, so that what is *ex vero ductum* or *positum* is “based on actual fact.”⁷¹ By the same logic, to remove someone from a truth-location by force (as in *de-cipio*, literally, “take away, capture from”) is, metaphorically, to prevent them from knowing the truth: that is, “to deceive” them.

The “missile” metaphor of mistakenness has a relatively restricted role to play in Greek speakers’ semantic system and tends to be elaborated on chiefly in contexts where the image’s metaphoricity is explicitly at play, whereas Latin’s “journey” metaphor characterizes a meaning structure with widespread effects in the language even, or especially, where a theory of the truth is not at issue. This contrast suggests these metaphors operated very differently at the level of culture. In discerning the sense of Latin’s ways of speaking about what

67 Plaut. *Rud.* 1150–51.

68 Aul. Gell. *NA.* 14.1.33.

69 E.g., Cic. *De orat.* 1.220; 1.262; *Lucull.* 6; 47; Sen. *Clem.* 2.3.2.

70 See Berger 1953, 761

71 Hor. *Serm.* 2.56; Ov. *Fast.* 2.859. If, etymologically, *sentire* means “go (towards)” (De Vaan 2008, 554), then Cicero’s *sentire vera* would also appear to reflect the metaphor.

is “mistaken” over different authors, genres, periods of the language, and levels of the linguistic code, the “wandering” metaphor can in fact be distinguished from Greek’s “missing a target” metaphor as a “folk” or “cultural” model. Unlike an expert model, a folk or cultural model is a non-technical “naïve” understanding that a society’s members rely on implicitly in organizing their experience and in reasoning. It is a model that functions as a community’s unconscious and automatic operating theory of “just how things work” in some domain of experience.⁷²

From this perspective, it is interesting to consider the very different ontologies of mistakenness that the images of Greek’s “missile” metaphor and Latin’s “wandering” metaphor seem to provide to speakers of those languages. Take the image of the Greek metaphor again. In this image, “true” or “correct” reasoning is seen as corresponding to a discrete, finitary act: a one-off “shooting” whose success or failure in reaching the truth-target is independent of the outcome of any other “shooting.” The metaphor implies a certain finality and causality to mistakenness: since rational thought consists of a series of “shots” at the truth-target, single instances of reasoning are viewed as either right or wrong, true or false. That is, according to the metaphor, once let loose, a thought-missile either “hits” or “misses”; there is no middle ground. the trajectory of a thought-missile cannot be corrected in mid-course, and so there is no remedy for failure, except perhaps to “shoot” again. There is also only one “true” way to hit the truth-target, corresponding to a direct trajectory from the location of the thought-archer to the predetermined location of the truth-target.

Next, consider the image given by the Latin metaphor, which engenders a view that, in reasoning, the truth-seeker undertakes an act with all the characteristics of a journey. In this image, truth-seeking is an ongoing process of metaphorical motion, and the truth is a destination towards which an individual advances within a single occurrence of temporal and spatial development. As when travelling on a road, progress towards this metaphorical truth-destination may be sometimes faster, sometimes slower. There may be obstacles, detours, and so on; conversely, there may be shortcuts or alternative routes. The actual endpoint of a journey may also not correspond to its originally intended destination, yet the journey will be “complete.” There is also a finality and causality to mistakenness implied by this image but one quite unlike that entailed by the Greek metaphor. Since truth-seeking is a journey,

72 The concept of “folk model” has been developed particularly by Holland and Quinn 1987; D’Andrade 1990; D’Andrade and Strauss 1992.

and journeys often involve turning back, retracing one's steps, or assaying different paths, rational thought—imagined in this metaphor, as a single, unified event of “getting to” the truth—may quite naturally have an *indirect* aspect with all sorts of deviations that may nevertheless eventually bring the traveller to the intended destination. In this image, attaining the truth is not a finitary act with all-or-nothing consequences, but a continuous process in which “wandering” can and perhaps always does enter into the picture.

Arising directly out of the inferential structure of the “journey” metaphor, the notion that mistakenness is a natural, if not in fact necessary part of “getting to” the truth stands out, we would claim, as a distinctive feature of Latin speakers’ understanding of mistakenness, a sort of hidden ideology that implicitly motivates their thinking about and indeed valuing of “mistakes.” Now, in making such a claim, we may appear to be advocating for a strongly Whorfian view of the relationship between language and thought, that is, that the structure of the Latin language, including its metaphorical structure, determines (in the sense of “limits”) its speakers’ possible pathways of thought. Hardly so. First, areas of Roman cultural practice in which this metaphor’s “metaphysics” do not hold are not far to seek. In Roman religious practice, for instance, mistakes were scrupulously sanctioned. Any mistake in the recitation of a ritual formula or in carrying out the ritual procedure was deemed a dangerous omen requiring the repetition of the ritual in its entirety, motivating the inclusion of expressions like *sive deus sive dea* as hedges against human fallibility. Similarly, certain utterances by Roman magistrates were legally binding even if somehow “mistaken”: for example, Varro tells us that if a praetor freed a slave using the formula “*do, dico, addico*,” the slave’s new status was irrevocable, even if these words were spoken “by mistake” (*vitio*)—say, on a *dies nefastus*.⁷³

Moreover, Roman authors regularly deploy the “wandering” metaphor for overtly creative and imaginative aims. For instance, Ovid plays on the two meanings of *error* when he asks in reference to Actaeon, *quid enim scelus error habebat?*—Actaeon’s “mistake” is precisely his “wandering.”⁷⁴ Consider also two well-known “mistakes” from Latin literature: Lucius’ transformation into an ass in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* and Tarpeia’s love affair with Tatiatus as told by Propertius. In both cases, representations of literal wandering work in parallel with, and provide a narrative framework for, figurative “wandering.” Lucius is accidentally transformed into an ass when Photis, eager to help him indulge his curiosity over her mistress Pamphile’s shape-shifting powers, mistakes one

73 Varro, *Ling.* 6.4.30.

74 Ov. *Met.* 3.142.

box of magical ointment for another. Lucius rubs himself down with the oil and he turns into a donkey, requiring him to go wandering off in search of the roses Photis assures him will restore his original form. Similarly, the “mistake” Tarpeia makes in falling in love with the Sabine king is reproduced by what Tara Welch has called her “confinement” to a sort of “no-man’s land” where she is compelled to tread and re-tread the “windy path” (*torta via*) between the Capitoline and Forum.⁷⁵ In both cases, revelation of “the truth”—Lucius’ human form and Tarpeia’s feelings for Tatius—corresponds to reaching a destination—the temple of Isis and the Sabine camp in the Forum, respectively. The metaphor, in short, implies a spatial dimension to mistakenness that can be realized “literally” through narration.

Nor do Latin authors have any trouble using innovative metaphorical images in representing mistakenness. In Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, for instance, poetic mistakes are expressed in terms of “stumbling” and of “wandering,” but also as “spots (of dirt?)” (*maculae*) and “fallings-short” (*delicta*).⁷⁶ Seneca, too, resorts to a “stumbling” metaphor, a “wandering” metaphor, an “archery” metaphor, and a “nautical” metaphor, all in dizzying succession:

We make mistakes in life (*peccamus*) because we all tend to consider our lives in pieces; no one thinks about the whole of their life. An archer wishing to shoot an arrow (*ille qui sagittam vult mittere*) should know what he is aiming at, and then direct and guide the shaft with his hand. Our plans go wrong (*errant*), because they are not aimed at anything (*non habent quo derigantur*); no one can have the wind at their back if they don’t know the port they’re heading for.⁷⁷

Cicero, meanwhile, uses images of physical weightiness to metaphorize “trueness” and “falseness,” as when he speaks of glory as being “true, heavy, and solid” and of “solid and true praise,” or conversely of “light and false men.”⁷⁸

75 Welch 2005, 76.

76 Hor. *Ars. P.* 347–60.

77 Sen. *Ep. mor.* 71.3.

78 Cic. *Phil.* 5.18.50, *vera, gravis, solida*; *Sest.* 93, *solidam laudem veramque*; *Lael.* 25.91, *levium hominum atque fallacium*. The metaphor is also easily extended. The difficulty of correcting a mistake can be suggested by construing *error* as a trap in which someone can be “held (*teneri*)” or “entangled (*implicari*)” or “twisted (*versari*)”—as, for instance, when Cicero (*ND.* 1.29) asks of Democritus’ treatment of “wandering images” as gods, “Isn’t he caught in the greatest mistake (*nonne in maximo errore versatur*)?”

Nevertheless, as a symbolic structure that manifests itself across the spectrum of Latin speakers' conventional and non-conventional representations of mistakenness, the "wandering" metaphor can appear to enter spontaneously and automatically into their thinking about such experience even in the most varied contexts of sense-making. Its influence is probably detectable, for example, in the sentiment Plutarch puts in the mouth of the general Marcus Minucius Rufus, that "while it is beyond human skill to make no mistakes in matters of importance, a brave and sensible man makes use of his mistakes as warnings for the future."⁷⁹ And likely also detectable in Josephus' description of the Romans as a people who, to paraphrase, think that mistakes can be better than successes, since the latter, if they occur by chance, entice men into acting rashly, whereas the former provide good instruction against repetition.⁸⁰ Consider also Quintilian's theory of learning, which is not only couched explicitly in this metaphor, but also grounded implicitly in its logic. As Quintilian explains, there is no "shortcut" (*compendium*) to correct knowledge. Students should not be asked to "hurry on" (*properare*) through a lesson, since "haste" (*festinatio*) impedes accurate learning. Instead, by "going back to" (*repetere*) and "treading over" (*inculcare*) the material, it will be learned correctly. In this way, when students do make mistakes (*cum errarunt*), they will rely on the process itself to help them "arrive at the thing" (*consequi rem*)—later in the same passage.⁸¹

Seneca's reliance on the Stoics' "journeying" metaphor of virtuous living is also well known. But in the Roman philosopher's vision, making mistakes, "wandering," is almost a precondition of finding the truth. His own practice of moral self-reflection, described in *On Anger*, seems thoroughly conditioned by this image:

What could be more beautiful than the habit of scrutinizing one's entire day? I exercise this authority and daily bring myself before the court. When the light has been removed, and my wife, knowing of my practice, falls silent, I examine my entire day and rehearse everything I have said and done; I conceal nothing from myself, I omit nothing. For why

79 Plut. *Fab.* 13.2: 'ἄνδρες' ἔφη 'συστρατιῶται, τὸ μὲν ἀμαρτεῖν μηδὲν ἐν πράγμασι μεγάλοις μείζον ἢ κατ' ἀνθρωπὸν ἐστί, τὸ δ' ἀμαρτόντα χρῆσασθαι τοῖς πταιίσμασι διδάγμασι πρὸς τὸ λοιπὸν ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντος'.

80 Flav. Joseph. *Bell. Iud.* 3.100: ἡγούνται τε τῶν ἀπὸ τύχης ἐπιτευγμάτων ἀμείνους τὰς ἐπὶ τοῖς προβουλευθεῖσιν διαμαρτίας, ὥς τοῦ μὲν αὐτομάτου καλοῦ δελεάζοντος εἰς ἀπρομήθειαν, τῆς σκέψεως δέ, κὰν ἀτυχῆσῃ ποτέ, πρὸς τὸ μὴ αὖθις καλὴν ἐχούσης μελέτην.

81 Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.30–35.

should I fear any of my mistakes (*quare enim quicquam ex erroribus meis timeam*), when I can say: "See that you no longer act in this way. Now I forgive you."⁸²

Michel Foucault has argued that in this passage Seneca employs a "bureaucratic" metaphor in which he imagines himself as a kind of "permanent administrator of himself" whose task it is to ensure that correct rules of conduct are followed.⁸³ Since in Seneca's view moral development is always a work in progress and improvement comes only in small degrees, mistakes are thus welcomed as an essential part of the sage's attainment of true knowledge. Yet what likely delivers this view of mistakes is the "journey" metaphor again, reflected in Seneca's spatial vocabulary: *scrutor* ("to search after"), *remetior* ("to measure over; traverse"), *abscondo* ("to put out of sight," perhaps originally "depart from"), and above all *transeo* ("to go across"). It is almost as if Seneca, as a consequence of his cultural embeddedness, cannot avoid thinking of mistakes as journeys.

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82 Sen. *De ira* 1.29.

83 Foucault 1999, 164–65.

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